Sablan takes part in Envision's National Youth Leadership Forum. PAGE 2
IPI opposes CCC's motion for $100K judgment. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

$1

Saipan Tribune

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MONDAY SEPTEMBER 11, 2023
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ALL ABOUT CARS CRYSTAL MARINO
Despite the heavy rain, hundreds of car enthusiasts flocked to the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe last Saturday to witness the Island Summer Auto Fest car show and NMTech's 2023 burnout competition (inset) at the back of the nearby Joeten-Kiyu Public Library.

'TOUCHBACK' COUNTDOWN
Number of days left until the "touchback" rule takes effect on Sept. 30, 2023:
19

FOIA request filed for FEMA reimbursements

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

DeLeon Guerrero

Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) has filed a Freedom of Information Act request to get documents containing information about Federal Emergency Management Agency reimbursements for CNMI expenditures related to disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic.

DeLeon Guerrero, in a letter last week addressed to FOIA

See FOIA on Page 4

Japanese historian highlights internment camps on Saipan, Tinian, and Okinawa

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Japanese historian Dr. Ayuko Takeda shared a sneak peek about her latest research on Northern Mariana Islands internment camps during World War II in her presentation in the 6th Marianas History Conference last Sept. 2 at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan.

See JAPANESE on Page 4

CHRYSTAL MARINO
Japanese historian Dr. Ayuko Takeda makes her presentation during the 6th Marianas History Conference last Sept. 2 at the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan in Garapan.

CPA to clarify if CNMI exempted from US DOT order regarding China flights

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has taken matters, regarding the return of the China market, into its own hands with the agency's board unanimously voting to get clarification from the Federal Aviation Administration on whether or not the CNMI is exempted from the U.S. Department of Transportation's China Part Order 213.

Last Friday, the CPA board of directors held an emergency

See CPA on Page 4

Powerful quake in Morocco kills more than 2,000 people

By SAM METZ and MOSA'AB ELSHAMY
Associated Press

MARRAKECH, Morocco (AP) —A rare, powerful earthquake struck Morocco, sending people

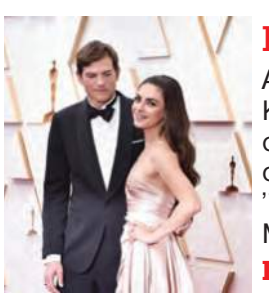
See QUAKE on Page 4

AP
A man stands next to a damaged hotel after the earthquake in Moulay Brahim village, near the epicentre of the earthquake, outside Marrakech, Morocco, Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023.

INSIDE

BUSINESS
NTT Docomo, Inc. further supports American Red Cross Typhoon Mawar relief efforts through a donation of $46,000.
PAGE 11

HEALTH & FITNESS
A new COVID variant is circulating. Flu season is about to begin. Respiratory syncytial virus is becoming a greater cause of hospitalizations.
PAGE 14



LIFE & STYLE
Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis apologized for character letters they wrote on behalf of fellow "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson.
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Local

Sablan takes part in Envision's National Youth Leadership Forum

This summer, Soledad "Somei" Maria Tudela Sablan from Saipan joined outstanding high school students from across the nation who took part in a unique academic and career-oriented development experience, the Envision Experience National Youth Leadership Forum for Medicine and Healthcare which took place at the University of California Berkeley.

NYLF Medicine and Healthcare is one of the Envision by WorldStrides family of programs (www.envisionexperience.com) that enable students to explore their interests and experience learning beyond the classroom.

Sablan is a junior at Saipan International School and is currently the vice president for the Rotary Club of Saipan SIS Interact Club and was the vice president for the SIS Student Council (STUCO) during her sophomore year for school year 2022-2023.

She is a two-time member of the NMI's National Speech and Debate Team and recently participated in the 2023 National Speech and Debate Tournament that was held in Mesa, Arizona. She has competed in storytelling, prose, and duo interpretation alongside her duo partner and brother Jesse Sablan. She also competed nationally during her middle school years with the National Junior Speech and Debate Team.

Sablan graduated salutatorian for the Saipan Community School class of 2021 and is currently a member of the National Honor Society and formerly the National Junior Honor Society. She is passionate about music and spends most of her leisure time songwriting and composing music. She has taught ukulele lessons at the SIS Summer Ukulele Program, which her siblings co-founded.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Soledad "Somei" Maria Tudela Sablan took part in the recent Envision Experience National Youth Leadership Forum for Medicine and Healthcare at the University of California Berkeley.

"I want to thank Ms. Church for recommending me to Envision. This experience has opened my eyes and has given me a new perspective. I was able to meet inspirational guest speakers and mentors who taught me alot about medicine and healthcare. I also made friends with many wonderful people who helped make the whole experience enjoyable. Berkley was also a beautiful campus and made me feel at home," said Sablan.

Envision students admitted into the program were first nominated by either a teacher or mentor due to merit, academic promise, and leadership potential.

For over 35 years, Envision by WorldStrides has empowered extraordinary students to become their best selves through programs that enable them to discover their passion, explore a career, and positively impact their world. In 2018, Envision became part of the WorldStrides family. The largest provider of educational travel and experiences in the United States, WorldStrides works with over 50,000 educators each year to help more than 550,000 students see the world—and themselves—in new ways. ***(PR)***

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IPI opposes CCC's motion for $100K judgment

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC has filed a response in opposition of the Commonwealth Casino Commission's motion asking the District Court for the NMI to issue an order awarding them $100,000 in fees and costs for the expenses it incurred as a result of the preliminary injunction IPI previously filed.

IPI, through attorneys Samuel Slayer and Kevin Abikoff, has filed a response in opposition of CCC's recent request for $100,000 in fees and costs for expense for the expenses it incurred as a result of the preliminary injunction IPI previously filed.

"Plaintiff respectfully requests that the court deny defendant's motion to recover fees and costs. Should the Court determine that some recovery of the security is warranted, defendant's recovery should not exceed $69,068.15," said IPI's attorneys.

On May 23, 2022, IPI requested a temporary restraining order against the casino commission to prevent it from convening an enforcement hearing that would revoke IPI's exclusive casino license. The District Court granted IPI's motion for a TRO.

IPI provided the District Court for the NMI a $100,000 bond as directed by the court pursuant to filing the TRO.

IPI also sought an order compelling the commission to participate in a non-binding arbitration with the American Arbitration Association pursuant to the casino license agreement; and a preliminary injunction against the commission from proceeding with the revocation without first going to arbitration.

On Oct. 21, 2022, the commission appealed the District Court's ruling to the Ninth Circuit, which reversed the District Court's decision.

In June 28, 2023, the U.S.

See IPI on Page 4

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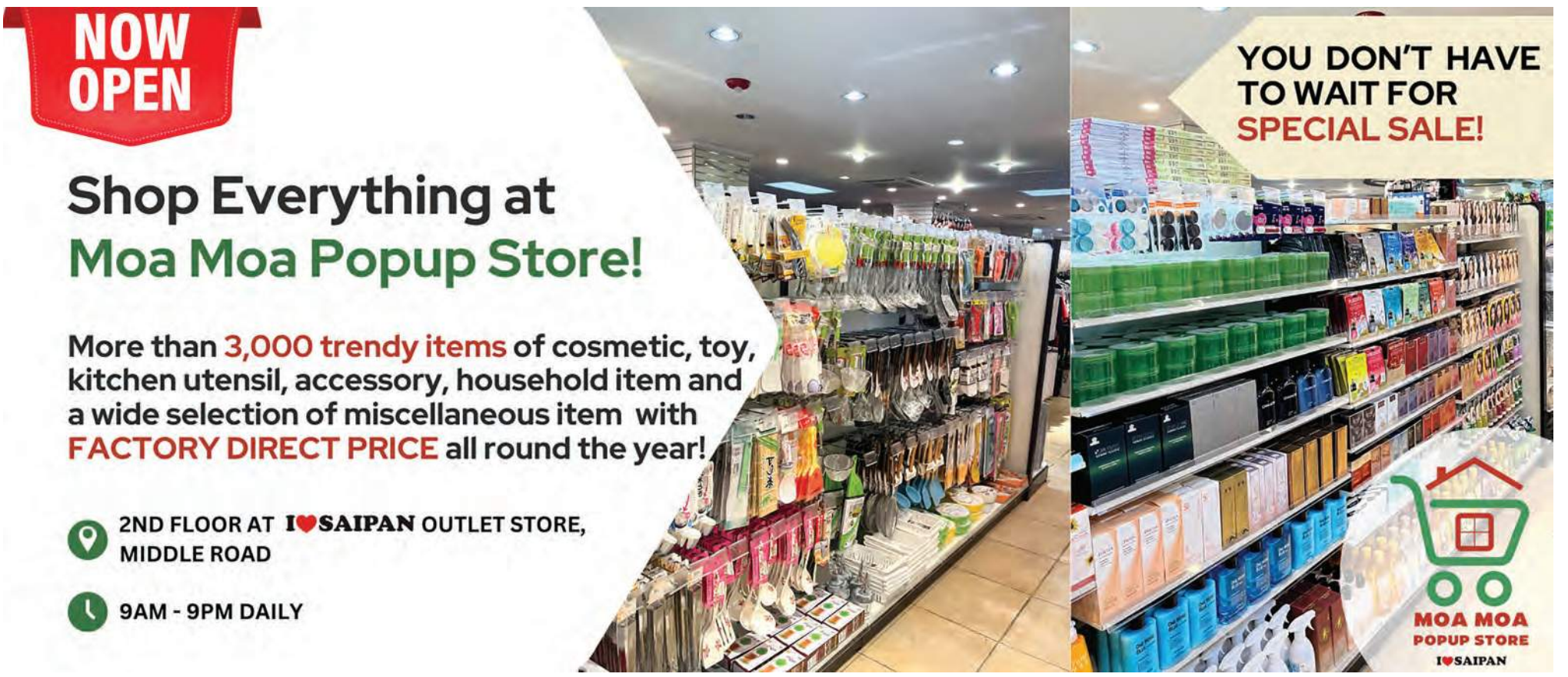
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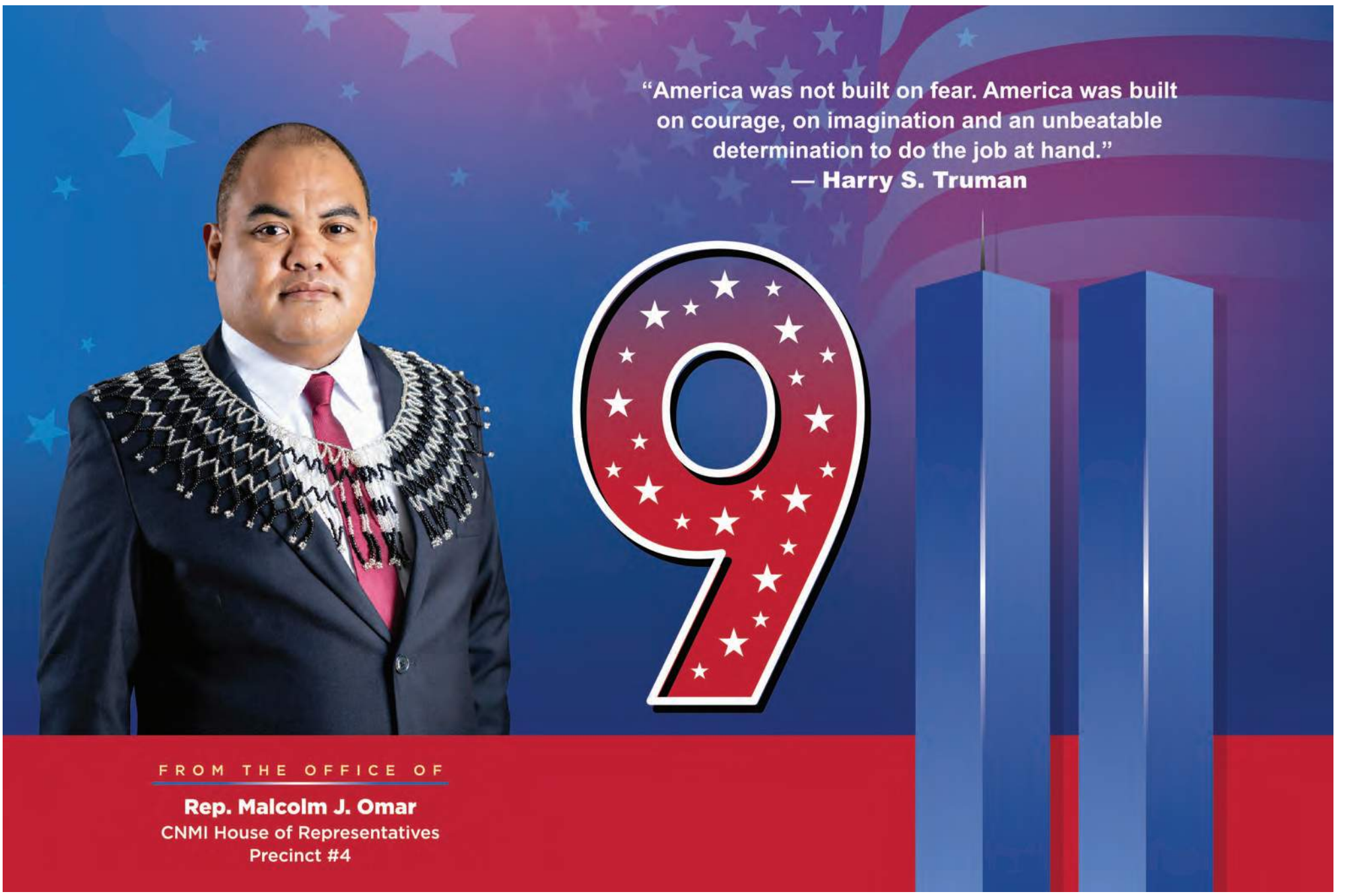
"America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand."
— Harry S. Truman
9
FROM THE OFFICE OF
Rep. Malcolm J. Omar
CNMI House of Representatives
Precinct #4

Judiciary to launch Family Court night sessions

Starting Nov. 7, Family Court will hold night sessions on the first Tuesday of every month from 5pm to 8:30pm at the Guma' Hustisia. These after-hours sessions will help those who work during regular business hours. The sessions will be limited initially to matters involving child support in Family Court cases.

The court saw a need to open its doors after 5pm for community convenience and efficiency.

Some parties are unable to attend court proceedings due to inflexible work hours and, at times, struggle to make payments because employers decrease their pay due to time spent in court.

Night sessions aim to solve these problems by allowing parties to come to court without the need to take time off from work.

"I have envisioned something like this for a long time. Family Court night sessions will help accomplish Goal 2 of the Judiciary's Strategic Plan, which is to ensure access to justice," said Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio, right, meets with Judiciary managers to plan for the launch of the Family Court Division's night sessions.

"I am happy the Family Court, under the leadership of Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio, is implementing these night sessions. This will help working community members avoid consequences and put prior issues behind them," said Presiding Judge Roberto C. Naraja. "If this pilot program is successful, the Superior Court may look into the expansion of other night sessions for additional dockets."

If you wish to learn more about Family Court night sessions, please contact special assistant to the Presiding Judge Janina Maratita at (670) 236-9744 or Janina.Maratita@nmijudiciary.gov. ***(PR)***

BOH

From page 6

of Hawaii for their generous small business grant," Stemify CNMI owner Arnel Gruspe said. "With their support, we're not only investing in our business, but also in the future of the CNMI's youth through robotics and automation training. Together, we're shaping a brighter tomorrow."

El Bishu co-owner Cassandra Deleon Guerrero expressed her business' plans for the future, "This will help us expand and be fully operational and just to do better things."

"It is community over competition, we're aiming to be a value-added product company to grow locally, and to inspire other small businesses so that we can provide products that are from the CNMI," Deleon Guerrero added.

Nadine Deleon Guerrero, the CNMI SBDC Network director, applauded the grant recipients and is eager for the CNMI SBDC to continue to provide assistance for the recipients and all small businesses.

"For every ten businesses that walk through our doors, nine out of ten will tell you their biggest barrier in entrepreneurship is access to capital," Deleon Guerrero said. "It is our hope that what you do for the five businesses we're about to award today not only leads the charge in our community with setting a great example of what banking institutions can do to give back to our small businesses, but more importantly, that the grants you provide, truly make an impact in their businesses, their livelihood and however small it may seem, our economy."

This grant program reflects Bank of Hawaii's ongoing commitment to nurturing emerging businesses and fostering an environment of collaboration and growth. By supporting these businesses, Bank of Hawaii hopes to contribute to the long-term sustainability and success of the local economy.

The CNMI SBDC Network promotes a business-friendly economic infrastructure in the community, builds entrepreneurial capacity and financial literacy within that community, and provides current and nascent small businesses with the technical assistance, counseling, training, and support they need to innovate, adapt, and grow.

The CNMI Small Business Development Center Network (CNMI SBDC) Network comprises the CNMI SBDC lead center located in Saipan, the Rota SBDC, and Tinian SBDC. CNMI SBDC Network is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Northern Marianas College. ***(PR)***

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Lt. Governor

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

This ad is paid for by NMHC funds.

Notice is hereby given that the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) is the agency authorized to allocate $2,186,599 of Low Incoming Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC) in the CNMI. The United States 1986 Tax Reform Act created the federal low-income housing tax credit program under Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code (Code) to assist with the development of low-income rental housing by providing qualified owners with credit to offset their federal tax obligations. The LIHTC is available to owners/developers of qualifying buildings and projects that meet certain low-income occupancy and rent restrictions.

Section 42 of the Code provides that the CNMI prepare a Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP) to determine housing priorities and to give preference to projects serving the lowest income tenants and projects obligated to serve qualified tenants for the longest periods. The QAP must incorporate selection criteria, which include project location, housing need characteristics, sponsor characteristics, tenant populations with special needs, and public housing waiting lists. There are no changes from the previous QAP which included capital needs assessment, limiting developer fees, and income averaging.

Application for Credits

Owners/Developers wishing to apply for the Credits may obtain and complete a LIHTC Application. The LIHTC Application will be available on the NMHC's website at www.nmhcgov.net by selecting the "LIHTC Tab".

Owners/Developers must file the completed LIHTC Application along with the **$2,500.00 Application Fee** at NMHC's Office by the Application Deadline of **4:30 p.m., October 20, 2023.** NMHC staff will then review the applications and will notify the Owners/Developers of any deficiencies within 14-days time and the Owners/Developers will be given 14-days to correct any deficiencies and to provide any supplemental information requested by NMHC. The projects will be scored and recommendations will be made to the NMHC Board of Directors for approval at its **November/December 2023** Board Meeting.

Notification of Awards

NMHC will notify Owners/Developers of the projects receiving Credits within fifteen (15) days following the November/December 2023 Board of Directors meeting. The reservation letter must be signed and returned to NMHC by no later than fifteen (15) days from the date of notification.

For more information on this program, please contact NMHC at (670)234-6866/9447.

/s/ **JESSE S. PALACIOS**
Corporate Director

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REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

FRANCISCO C. ADA/SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ARRIVAL TERMINAL RESTROOM DRAINAGE REPAIRS PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-001-23

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural/Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the Arrival Terminal Restroom Drainage Repairs at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Saipan, CNMI, Project No. CPA-SA-001-23.

The project is being funded by CPA and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the RFQ package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, at wprater@cnmiports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmiports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater via email to wprater@cnmiports.com or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m., Friday, September 1, 2023 CHST.

The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria available in the RFQ package.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications by no later than **5:00 p.m., FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2023 (CHST).** Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: August 8, 2023

GUAM & COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

WEBEX MEETING SEPTEMBER 12, 2023

U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
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DOI awards $463,785 to MINA, DLNR, BECQ

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs has awarded a total of $463,785 to the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance Tasi-Watch program, Department of Lands and Natural Resources' invasive species coordinator, and Bureau of Environmental Control and Quality for protection of coral reef natural resources.

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) said in his e-kilili newsletter over the weekend that OIA announced all three awards last Sept. 1.

Sablan said the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance Tasi-Watch program is receiving $125,000 to strengthen its local capacity and involvement in natural resource management and includes $25,000 to support compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act.

Sablan said the DLNR's invasive species coordinator is getting $218,785 for works in the Marianas and regionally to prevent the introduction of new invasive species.

He said the invasive species coordinator also supports ongoing work to minimize the impacts of existing invasive species.

The delegate said invasive species disrupt the islands' ecosystems in ways that threaten the livelihood and food sources.

Sablan said BECQ is receiving $120,000 to pay for annual dues to the Micronesia Challenge, a drone operator training program, the Watershed Warrior Program, and for best management practices and fire prevention signage.

He said the award to BECQ will also support compliance with the National Environmental Protection Act.

Rabauliman nominated to CEC board

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Arnold I. Palacios has nominated Trinidad L. Rabauliman to serve as a member of the Commonwealth Election Commission board of commissioners.

If confirmed by the Senate, Rabauliman will serve a four-year term, which became vacant and will expire on July 21, 2025. She will be representing the Third Senatorial District, or Saipan and Northern Islands.

Palacios informed Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan) last week that he and Lt. Gov. David M. Apatang are confident that Rabauliman is qualified and will be an asset on the CEC board.

Palacios told the nominee that he and Apatang are confident that she is qualified and will devote time and efforts to represent the interest of the community in this important board.

Rabauliman used to serve as a member of the CEC board. Then-governor Eloy S. Inos appointed her to serve on the CEC board on Aug. 7, 2013. She was subsequently confirmed by the Senate.

QUAKE

From page 1

racing from their beds into the streets and toppling buildings in mountainous villages and ancient cities not built to withstand such force. More than 2,000 people were killed, and the toll was expected to rise as rescuers struggled Saturday to reach hard-hit remote areas.

The magnitude 6.8 quake, the biggest to hit the North African country in 120 years, sent people fleeing their homes in terror and disbelief late Friday. One man said dishes and wall hangings began raining down, and people were knocked off their feet. The quake brought down walls made from stone and masonry, covering whole communities with rubble.

The devastation gripped each town along the High Atlas' steep and winding switchbacks in similar ways: homes folding in on themselves and mothers and fathers crying as boys and helmet-clad police carried the dead through the streets.

Remote villages like those in the drought-stricken Ouargane Valley were largely cut off from the world when they lost electricity and cellphone service. By midday, people were outside mourning neighbors, surveying the damage on their camera phones and telling one another "May God save us."

Hamid Idsalah, a 72-year-old mountain guide, said he and many others remained alive but had little future to look forward to. That was true in the short-term — with remnants of his kitchen reduced to dust — and in the long-term — where he and many others lack the financial means to rebound.

"I can't reconstruct my home. I don't know what I'll do. Still, I'm alive, so I'll wait," he said as he walked through the desert oasis town overlooking red rock hills, packs of goats and a glistening salt lake. "I feel heartsick."

In historic Marrakech, people could be seen on state TV clustering in the streets , afraid to go back inside buildings that might still be unstable. The city's famous Koutoubia Mosque, built in the 12th century, was damaged, but the extent was not immediately clear. Its 69-meter (226-foot) minaret is known as the "roof of Marrakech." Moroccans also posted videos showing damage to parts of the famous red walls that surround the old city, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

At least 2,012 people died in the quake, mostly in Marrakech and five provinces near the epicenter, Morocco's Interior Ministry reported Saturday night. At least 2,059 more people were injured — 1,404 critically — the ministry said.

"The problem is that where destructive earthquakes are rare, buildings are simply not constructed robustly enough to cope with strong ground shaking, so many collapse, resulting in high casualties," said Bill McGuire, professor emeritus of geophysical and climate hazards at University College London.

In a sign of the huge scale of the disaster, Morocco's King Mohammed VI ordered the armed forces to mobilize specialized search and rescue teams and a surgical field hospital, according to a statement from the military.

JAPANESE

From page 1

In an exclusive interview with *Saipan Tribune*, Takeda said it took her three years to complete "Chains of Internment: U.S. Military Governance of Camps in the Northern Mariana Islands and Okinawa."

A graduate of University of California Irvine, with a PhD in history, Takeda said it was during the process of her time earning her doctorate in history that she had begun looking into the history of the Marianas.

What triggered her to look deeper into the subject of the internment camps on Saipan and Tinian was a book by University of California Los Angeles professor Keith Camacho "Cultures of Commemoration."

"When I read his book, I was surprised. When it comes to internment camps, I often imagine the Japanese-American internment camp in the United States, but here on Saipan and Tinian, we had internment camps... wow! I didn't know that. And when I checked into some Okinawan history, I also saw some references to the internment camps, and even though I am Japanese, I'd never heard about the Okinawan experience of internment before, and I wondered what happened, in both Okinawa and Saipan during the battles and after the war. I found out that the U.S. military also conducted internment in Okinawa, during and after the war, so I'm comparing, the U.S. military internment on Saipan and Okinawa."

She shared that during the battles of Saipan and Tinian, the U.S. military brought the surviving people to the camps they erected on the beach and then later to Camp Susupe. So, during the two-year internment, lasting from 1944 to 1946, the U.S. military conducted various types of rehabilitation projects in the camp these includes allowing people inside the camp to have a certain amount of self-governance, English education, medical care, and also the military, in a sense, coursed internments to perform camp labor.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

CPA

From page 1

meeting at the Tinian International Airport to discuss the CNMI's exemption from U.S. DOT's China Part Order 213 which essentially suspended/ restricted flights from China entering the United States.

The order was established at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic back in 2020.

During the emergency board meeting yesterday, all five CPA board members unanimously voted in favor of writing to the FAA to get clarification on whether the CNMI is exempted, and if not, seek help to get an exemption so that the CNMI can see the return of its China market

"The board acted to instruct the executive director to clarify with the FAA if Annex VI of the U.S. China bilateral agreement, which exempts the CNMI from the flight frequency limitations between the US and China, is unaffected by the limitations imposed by Part 213 Order and if so, have instructed board counsel to seek technical legal assistance to seek such exemption so that any hindrance to the return of China market is removed," said CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds.

King-Hinds, who has been vocal about the dire situation the CNMI faces absent the China market, said that this is CPA's desperate attempt to generate revenue.

"We have received interest from several of our airline partners who previously served [the China] market and the board is taking this action to exhaust all efforts to generate revenue," she said.

King-Hinds said that the decision was a no-brainer given that come fiscal year 2024, CPA will be forced to impose the recently adopted increases that would, in turn, negatively impact inter-island travel for the people of the CNMI.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

FOIA

From page 1

officer in Washington, D.C., requested for documents regarding FEMA's reimbursements for CNMI expenditures since 2018 pertaining to Typhoon Mangkhut, Super Typhoon Yutu, and the pandemic.

The Senate president also requested for information about the actual FEMA reimbursement payments to the CNMI.

DeLeon Guerrero sought information about FEMA reimbursements on such expenditures including the total amount paid or reimbursed to the CNMI.

She asked for information about total amount of requested reimbursements pending FEMA's approval, if any.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s question as to why she needs to file an FOIA and not just get such information from the administration, DeLeon Guerrero said yesterday that there have been numerous appearances in the Legislature where the question remains open of how much disaster expenses there is, how much was submitted to FEMA for reimbursement, and how much has been approved by FEMA for reimbursement, and how much has been actually received by the CNMI.

She said getting this information answered by the federal cognizant agency, here being FEMA, will shed light on these long-awaited financial inquiries that will help the legislature make better understand and make sound financial decisions that affects not just the government but also the people's lives.

"Financial transparency and accountability can only move us toward a better financial stewardship of our Commonwealth," the president pointed out.

In her FOIA filing, DeLeon Guerrero said the purpose of her request is to determine the total amount of FEMA reimbursement funds received by the CNMI since 2018 for expenditures related to Typhoon Mangkhut, Super Typhoon Yutu, and the pandemic.

DeLeon Guerrero requested to notify her of the fees that must be paid for this request.

In the alternative, she requested a waiver of all fees for this request.

The president said disclosure of the requested information to her is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the CNMI government including how and for what purpose are FEMA reimbursement funds dispersed and expended.

DeLeon Guerrero said the requested information is not for any commercial interest or purpose.

IPI

From page 3

Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit issued a ruling in favor of CCC which essentially reversed a previous District Court decision that stopped CCC from revoking IPI's casino license, and compelling CCC to arbitrate its dispute with the casino investor.

CCC argued that because the Ninth Circuit reversed the District Court's decision compelling the parties into arbitration, it establishes that the commission had the right to proceed with revocation proceedings therefore the issuance of the injunction was wrongful.

In addition, the commission states that it has monetary damages that resulted from the injunction, as the District Court compelled the commission to participate in arbitration and the commission has incurred significant expenses as a result of the wrongful injunction.

Specifically, CCC argues that it expended significant costs participating in the arbitration including administrative fees to the American Arbitration Association, payment to the arbitrator, expert fees, travel expenses, and all other associated costs.

"As a result of this court's order, the Commission has spent over $94,068.15. In addition to the arbitration expenses, the Commission has suffered financially due to its inability to pursue the revocation action," CCC said.

Stigmatization of people with disabilities

By PRESTON SARALU
Special to the Saipan Tribune

People with disabilities often face stigma across the globe and even here in the CNMI. Stigma often causes several barriers that may limit or affect opportunities for people with disabilities, such as employment, healthcare, public services, etc. Stigmatization may lead into social avoidances, discrimination, stereotyping, blaming, and several other acts of stigma. In the CNMI we often do not realize that there is need for a more inclusive community that breaks down the barriers of stigmatization and open up doors for equal rights and opportunities for people with disabilities.

To explain further the stigmatization of people with disabilities, we must look at the forms of stigmatization. For instance, stereotyping of an individual who may have a disability is when people assume that these individuals are helpless or unable to make decisions of their own. We often don't realize that even the thought of not including individuals with disabilities in opportunities such as trainings, employment, and/or sport events as a result of their disability can be considered stereotyping. Furthermore, people often assume that when one individual has one form of a disability, they may have several other forms of disabilities, but sometimes that is not the case and therefore causing a stereotype of people with disabilities.

Another form of stigmatization of people with disabilities is condescension. Condescension is where people with disabilities may be overly-protected by a person who cares for them due to the assumption that they will be helpless without them. Although it is good to have a caregiver or a family member to lend a hand, sometimes being overly-protective of a person with disabilities may make them lose confidence in themselves. People with disabilities often want to be included and be offered the same opportunities as everyone else. A caregiver or family member who may be overly-protective of a person with disability may not realize that they take away opportunities and limit their way of inclusion into the community.

As stigmatization of people of disabilities may affect the overall development of an inclusive society, there are several ways people with disabilities overcome the challenges of stigmatization. For one, showing pride of their disability gives way to a more positive aspect of their disability and stray away from the negative and discriminatory actions from other people. By such pride of their disabilities, individuals with disabilities avoid all aspects of stigmatization and may band together to support one another to become resilient and confident individuals.

For more information on the stigmas of people with disabilities, or to learn more about their individual rights, please contact the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. (NMPASI) at (670) 235-7273/7274 or visit our website at www.nmpasi.org.

Preston Saralu is a program aide at the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems, Inc. Article is sourced from Healthy Aging and Physical Disabilities.

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• Report to duty punctually wearing correct uniform, clean and well pressed including appropriate (polished) and name tag at all times
• Complete opening duties and procedures established at the OHAS Café/Bakery work location in Garapan.
• Welcome and acknowledge all guests according to company standards, anticipate and address guests' service need, assist individuals with disabilities, and thank guests with genuine appreciation.
• Accurately compute sales prices, total purchases, and receive and process cash payment, credit cards, refunds/cancellation transactions. Record transaction in POS system at the time of order.
• Assist customers in choosing cakes, pastries, bread and other bakery products including non-alcoholic drinks according to their specific tastes.
• Prepare customers with information on freshly baked products and non-alcoholic drinks and their ingredients.
• Pick up trays and clean tables as needed to ensure clean dining area.
• Pick chosen pieces, inquire how customers would like them packed, and pack them accordingly to their special request.
• Carry baked goods to the display cases for proper set up according to company standards.
• Prepare merchandize for selling including beverages for purchase.
• Complete closing duties, including restocking items, turning off lights.
• Protect the privacy and confidential information of guests.
Interested applicants are to submit a resume and complete the company employment application at the:
Human Resource Department, Kensington Hotel Saipan, San Roque
MONDAY – FRIDAY, 9:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT
670 322-3311 EXT. 4573/4505
WE ARE PRESENTLY ACCEPTING TO FILL THE POSITION ON SEPTEMBER 15, 2023.

From the Management & Staff of
Hafa Adai! Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
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P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 05-2023

Opening date: August 09, 2023 **Closing date: September 11, 2023**

Location: SAIPAN **SALARY: UNCLASSIFIED**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NATURE OF WORK

The Executive Director is the CPA chief executive officer, serving at the pleasure of the CPA Board of Directors and responsible for implementing the policies and decisions of the CPA Board of Directors. Statutory powers and duties of the Executive Director are listed in the Commonwealth Code at 2 CMC §2127.

Under the general direction of the CPA Board of Directors, the Executive Director is responsible for the planning, supervision, and coordination of the management, operation, and maintenance of all CNMI airports and seaports, as stated in the CPA statue and regulations. The Executive Director is in charge and control of the operation and maintenance of all CPA ports. The Executive Director is also in full charge and control of construction of all CPA ports, facilities, and other necessary or incidental works controlled by or required to be constructed or repaired by CPA. The Executive Director exercises independent judgment in finding solutions to situations or problems in which no clear precedents exist.

The Executive Director is to devote full time to the business of CPA. The Executive Director shall be on call at all times after normal working hours and on weekends and holidays. The Executive Director shall also make recommendations to the CPA Board of Directors on matters impacting airport and seaport management, maintenance, and operation, represent CPA at meetings and conferences and before community groups, service organizations, civic committees, and technical industry organizations with respect to airport and seaport matters, and perform related duties as required.

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the ***CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office, Tinian International Airport, or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport.*** Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Monday, September 11, 2023.**

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin, Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.robert@cnmiports.com and hrspecialist@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH MUSEUM
Office of the Governor
Garapan, Saipan

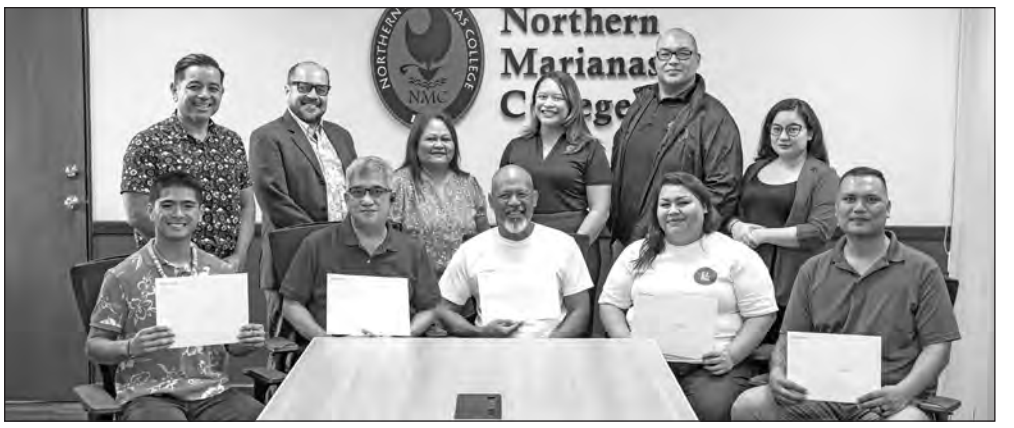
Notice of Regular Board of Governors Meeting

In accordance of 1 CMC § 9901 et seq, as amended, the Commonwealth Museum Board of Governors is hereby giving notice of its regular board meeting, to be held on, Thursday. September 14, 2023 at 10:00a.m. at the Commonwealth Museum Building at Garapan.

AGENDA

I. Preliminary Matters
a. Call to Other
b. Roll Call
c. Adoption of Agenda
II. Public Comment
III. Election of Officers: Chairman & Vice chairman
IV. Executive Session
V. Miscellaneous
VI. Next Board Meeting
VII. Adjournment

/s/
Oscar M. Babauta
Chairman, Pro Temp
Special Assistance for Administration



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Top left, Frankie Eliptico, Northern Marianas College vice president of Administration & Advancement, Dr. Galvin Deleon Guerrero, NMC president; Rose Sumor, vice president and branch manager of Bank of Hawaii CNMI; Nadine Deleon Guerrero, CNMI SBDC Network director, David J. Attao, NMC chief financial officer; and Mercilynn Kaneshi Palec, CNMI SBDC associate network director. Bottom left, grant award recipients: Cameron Atalig, owner of Tupu Cane Juice; Arnel Gruspe, owner of Stemify CNMI; Gene Weaver, owner of Tasi to Table, Inc.; Cassandra Deleon Guerrero, co-owner of El Bishu; and Simon Deleon Guerrero, owner of Kumoi Farms, LLC.

BOH, SBDC announce grant recipients in support of local small businesses

Tupu Cane Juice, Kumoi Farms, Tasi to Table, El Bishu, and Stemify CNMI were awarded $5,000 each by Bank of Hawaii through its Kinometi Para I Kumunidåt I Islå-ta—Small Business Revitalization and Development Grant program.

The program is designed to provide financial assistance and resources to small businesses that have demonstrated exceptional potential and a commitment to making a positive impact amongst other small businesses and encourage new businesses to emerge.

Out of 82 applicants, the selection process led by the bank rigorously evaluated and ultimately chose five companies. The evaluation criteria included factors such as business viability, innovation, and community engagement. Additionally, all grant applicants were required to participate in a seminar conducted by the CNMI Small Business Development Center at the Northern Marianas College.

Rose Sumor, vice president and branch manager for Bank of Hawaii CNMI, is excited for the growing interest of the grant program within the community and hopes to further spread its intent and goal for the grant.

"Every year we aim to see small businesses grow and thrive and revitalize our economy in their unique ways, and in return, bettering the lives of our community through their products and services," Sumor said.

The grant program was met with an overwhelming response from businesses across various sectors. The diversity of industries represented by the grant recipients highlights the vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem present in our community. The recipients represented the industries of livestock and agriculture, localized and organic beverages, women-owned confectionery products, education services in sustainable lifestyles, and robotics and automation.

Cameron Atalig, the owner of Tupu Cane Juice, keeps the business decisions grounded by family and intends to utilize their newly acquired capital to support the community.

"Firstly, we would need to discuss as a family on how to use the grant money, but one thing for sure is that we want to be involved and support community projects," Atalig said. "We've previously participated with the CNMI Youth Congress by giving out free beverages for their Summer Sports Blitz program. At the time, we didn't have enough capital to match the demand. This grant will allow us to have the funds to support more projects that benefit the community without having to fall short on our resources."

Simon Deleon Guerrero, the owner of Kumoi Farms, intends to support other businesses by providing certified, packaged, and locally sourced pork products.

"We are producers of pork meat," Deleon Guerrero said. "This award supports our plan to obtain U.S. Department of Agriculture certification for processing and packaging. Currently, our piggery is USDA approved for operations but we want to expand in order to provide fresh pork products to local small businesses and restaurants to promote fresh and healthy food."

Gene Weaver, owner of Tasi to Table, Inc., shared his vision on how his business aims at elevating the experience and culture of fishing to the youth.

"We're giving our youth life skills that can be passed down from generation to generation," Weaver said.

"These skills aren't taught in the education system and it also goes beyond teaching them how to fish. We also aim to teach them how to preserve our waters and our land."

"Gratitude knows no bounds as we thank the Bank

See BOH on Page 7

MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) MVA-RFP-23-2304

Marianas Visitors Authority Representation, Promotional and Public Relations Services for the JAPAN MARKET

Submission /Closing Date: **October 10, 2023 Time: 3:00 PM ChST**

Submit sealed proposals to
Marianas Visitors Authority
Attn: Procurement Office
San Jose Professional Building
Beach Rd., San Jose
P.O. Box 500861
Saipan, MP 96950

Interested parties may pick up the RFP package on or after September 11, 2023 at the Marianas Visitors Authority Office, San Jose Professional Building, Beach Road, San Jose, Saipan, during the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. The RFP package can be emailed to anyone interested. The request via email must reference **"MVA-RFP-23-2304 MARIANAS VISITORS AUTHORITY REPRESENTATION, PROMOTIONAL, AND PUBLIC RELATIONS SERVICES FOR THE JAPAN MARKET."**

Proposals submitted from individuals outside the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or certified courier mail service on or before October 10, 2023, and must be received within seven (7) working days of that date. Proposers from outside the CNMI must notify the MVA Acting Procurement Officer Ms. Carol Chargualaf in writing of their intent to submit in order to receive the additional seven (7) days for the receipt of the actual Proposal Documents. This notice of intent may be submitted by any mode of written communication including facsimile to +1-670-664-3237 or emailed to cchargualaf@mymarianas.com and must be received no later than 3:00 PM., Chamorro Standard Time on September 29, 2023.

/s/ Gloria Cavanagh
Acting Chairperson,
MVA Board of Directors

/s/ Christopher A. Concepcion
Managing Director, MVA

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Lessons from Florida: Thought Trump's Big Lie was a problem? DeSantis' is even scarier

When Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a controversial elections law in 2021, he blocked all media from covering a signing ceremony, except Fox News, which exalted him during the live segment.

DeSantis' move was emblematic of how Florida's governor has treated voting access. His approach is one-sided, meant to appease the conservative voters he's courting in the 2024 presidential primary—too many who still believe the 2020 election was stolen from former President Donald Trump.

His approach isn't to make it easier for voters to cast ballots, especially if they are voters of color, poor and elderly. Much to the contrary.

If Trump created the "Big Lie," DeSantis' actions have advanced it. He's not necessarily an election denier, and he finally said last month that Trump lost in 2020. But voters should look at what he's done in Florida to understand how a potential DeSantis presidency could approach voter access.

DeSantis might not be in the White House—or ever get there, based on polling—but a case his administration is arguing in court could have implications for the 1965 Voting Rights Act, a hallmark of the Civil Rights movement that banned discriminatory voting practices.

A President DeSantis would appoint judges and, potentially, Supreme Court justices, allowing him to take cement his vision even further through the judicial system. Beyond what a president can do via official actions, his leadership and words also matter. A president who speaks about voting-rights protections as if they were "woke" special privileges for minorities can push his party to pass restrictive state voting laws, as Trump did after 2020.

Diluting Black power

Lawyers defending Florida against a lawsuit recently admitted in court that the congressional map DeSantis forced lawmakers to pass violated state safeguards against diminishing Black voting power. The map did away with a majority-Black district in North Florida. The state argues that such protections violate the U.S. Constitution. If that argument is successful, the case could be used to overturn voting protections at a national level, the Herald reported.

A federal judge on Saturday rebuffed the governor's legal argument and struck down that North Florida district.

The Florida Supreme Court, where DeSantis appointees hold a majority, is expected to decide the case by the end of the year.

Using the courts has been a common strategy by conservatives to reverse hard-fought rights. DeSantis has also used another tool: the immense power states have over elections.

Just hours after Trump won Florida in 2020, DeSantis praised how smoothly the state ran the elections:

See LESSONS on Page 9

Even on vacation, there's no escaping Vladimir Putin's murderous intentions

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the The Philadelphia Inquirer.

I'm just back from a theater vacation in London and a week in Scotland, which were meant to help me recoup from a strenuous work trip to Ukraine.

Things didn't exactly work out that way.

The first London play I attended was Patriots, a powerful drama about Vladimir Putin's revenge on the onetime "godfather" of 1990s Russian politics, Boris Berezovsky, who had facilitated Putin's rise to power.

I interviewed Berezovsky in the mid-1990s at the Davos World Economic Forum, when he was at the peak of his power, and considered himself superior to Putin. He bragged that he and fellow Russian big business oligarchs were the "robber barons" who would bring their country into the modern age "as the Rockefellers and Carnegies did in America's 19th century."

Putin never forgave Berezovsky's superiority complex.

The Russian tycoon was found hanged on March 23, 2013, while living in forced exile in Britain. (The coroner was unable to conclude whether he committed suicide or was strangled.)

On Aug. 23, three days after I saw Patriots (on a day I also took in the violent power struggles of Shakespeare's Macbeth at the Globe Theatre), current events forced visions of Putin's vendettas back onto my mind.

That was the day the private plane of onetime Putin pal — and Wagner private militia commander — Yevgeny Prigozhin exploded in midair over Russia.

Wagner won the only substantial victory for Moscow in Ukraine, and Prigozhin was hailed as a hero. But the plane explosion came two months after Prigozhin organized a brief, unsuccessful mutiny against Putin's military chiefs, whom he believed were doing a bad job in Ukraine.

The militia leader apparently thought he was too important to be murdered.

Both Berezovsky and Prigozhin badly misread Putin. So, I fear, does the White House.

Indeed, these two oligarchs' fates provide a flashing red-light warning about the incoherent U.S. strategy toward Ukraine, and the apparent White House failure to fully grasp what Putin is up to. Three points in particular come to mind.

First, Putin holds his grudges and will continue to seek revenge for what he regards as humiliation.

Berezovsky made the mistake of underestimating Putin's determination to destroy those who challenged or betrayed him — no matter how long it took.

Prigozhin misconstrued the Kremlin leader's initial indecision after the mutiny as weakness. But Putin used the next weeks to remove the mutineer's control of his Wagner militia—then played on Prigozhin's inflated ego to make him think he was impervious to assassination. Wrong.

In the case of Washington and the West, Putin made clear in his 2007 Munich speech that he fully blames them for the "tragedy" of the dissolution of the Soviet empire—the ultimate humiliation. He wants Washington's recognition of his right to rebuild that empire under Moscow's domination, with Ukraine as its heartland. He will not give up this aspiration unless he is militarily defeated.

Any U.S. or European misperception that Putin is willing to negotiate a compromise that recognizes Ukraine as a viable state is self-delusion as deep as that which doomed Berezovsky and Prigozhin.

Putin would only use negotiations with Kyiv — as he has done before — as an opportunity to rebuild his forces and restart the war.

Second, Putin plays a poor hand well, preying on Western weaknesses. With Berezovsky and Prigozhin, he played on their inflated egos, as he did with former President Donald Trump — and will do again if Trump wins in 2024.

With the Biden administration, Putin has cleverly played on its fear he will use nuclear weapons if Ukraine crosses his redlines. The goal is to persuade the West that it's too dangerous to give Ukraine the weapons it needs to retake Crimea, and actually defeat Russia.

Yet no matter how many redlines have been crossed, Putin refrains from using nukes. That is because he knows that will hurt him more than help him, losing the support of China and finally making him an international pariah. His major concern is keeping power, not committing political suicide. Russia's nukes are only valuable so long as Putin doesn't use them, and the Kremlin can tout them as a potent threat.

If the West continues to be intimidated by this threat, he will use it again and again, including against Western European nations. Who would then believe that NATO would go to war to save Estonia, or Finland?

Third, and most importantly, Putin is counting on Western nations to be as shortsighted about his intentions as were the two dead oligarchs. He is playing for time.

Just as he patiently waited to move against Berezovsky and Prigozhin, a long war plays to Putin's advantage. He knows manpower is precious to Ukraine, but he cares not how many men he loses, and is hoping for more weapons from North Korea.

He hopes to wait out the West's patience with supporting Ukraine financially and militarily. He is clearly hoping for a Trump victory that leads to a complete aid cutoff to Kyiv.

The White House, to Putin's probable delight, seems glued to a strategy that guarantees a long war, which Ukraine may not be able to sustain.

The Biden team hoped the current Ukrainian counterinsurgency would do enough damage in a short time to bring Putin to the negotiation table (a useless proposition unless the Russians are clearly defeated).

Yet Biden continues to refuse or delay the key systems — long range ATACMS missiles and F-16 warplanes — that would make faster Ukrainian progress possible. It refuses to recognize that only NATO membership for Ukraine will stop Putin's dreams of empire.

The longer the White House fails to recognize the Kremlin's goals and help Ukraine defeat them, the bigger the risk to Kyiv, to NATO, and to the West.

President Biden must stop misreading Putin before it is too late.

I hereby declare: naturalization tests are useless

By BOBBY GHOSH
Bloomberg Opinion

Bobby Ghosh is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist covering foreign affairs. Previously, he was editor in chief at Hindustan Times, managing editor at Quartz and international editor at Time.

"I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state, or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies…"

Exactly 10 years ago, I joined 136 people from 43 countries at a naturalization ceremony in a courtroom in downtown New York to proclaim our allegiance to the country that had embraced us as its own. Overcome by the emotional charge of the occasion, we struggled to keep our voices steady—and our eyes dry. Even Janet Napolitano, administering her final oath as secretary of homeland security, teared up as she welcomed us as "my fellow citizens."

I was flanked by a young woman from Ukraine and a middle-aged man from Peru; she worked on Wall Street, and he was a cab driver. As we told each other of the journeys that had brought us to that magical moment, her English was heavily accented; his was liberally interspersed with Spanish.

At one point, we talked about what had been the final hurdle on the path: The citizenship tests. She'd found the civics quiz quite stressful; he, like me, thought it had been easy-peasy. We didn't talk about the other test — the one that judged our English skills. More than likely, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services officers who had interviewed us skipped over that part of the process in order to move things along. In my case, the examining officer had said something along the lines of, "You've made it this far. There's no need to waste our time on this."

The Biden administration, which is proposing to make the English test harder, apparently does not understand what my USCIS examiner had come to recognize, from some combination of intuition and experience: If you want to be an American and have lived in this country long enough to qualify, then a language test is entirely redundant.

In the current format, the officer conducting the naturalization interview can evaluate the applicant's speaking ability by asking questions she or he has already answered when filing the paperwork. The new test, meant to go into effect next year, would include a speaking section in which applicants would be asked to describe scenes depicted in photographs, such as kinds of food or activities like commuting to work.

It sounds simple enough, but it is no less superfluous for that. All applicants for citizenship are tested by the ultimate arbiter of American life: The free market. Before they can get to the naturalization test, their abilities are vetted by a system that requires immigrants to find work, shelter, food and access to education and healthcare, with little support from the state.

And living the American way puts us all through a long and continuous examination, unlike the brief, one-off test at the USCIS. I had been fortunate to be fast-tracked for the Green Card that confers permanent residency in the U.S., and then waited five years, the minimum requirement, before applying for citizenship. It had taken the Ukrainian twice as long and the Peruvian three times as long to reach the test stage. By then, we were as fluent as required by the nature of our livelihoods and, by extension, our lives.

What's more, we were in a country where the government—city, state and federal alike—was getting better and better at communicating in languages other than English. Multilingual forms are the norm rather than the exception, and even the USCIS website offers information in 33 languages, from Amharic to Vietnamese.

If the language test is unnecessary, the civics test is just plain unfair. Applicants must correctly answer six out of 10 questions chosen from a published set of 100. Polls have shown most Americans would fail: Why should those who want to join their ranks be held to a higher standard?

Joe Biden is not the first American president to try and raise the bar for naturalization. Donald Trump wanted to make the civics test longer and to introduce more politically loaded questions. Biden rightly scrapped that plan. This makes his administration's proposal for a tougher English test even more inexplicable.

Over 9 million Green Card holders are eligible for citizenship, but barely 10% of them apply for naturalization each year. The Biden administration has said it wants that proportion to grow. In typical Washington fashion, it has set up an interagency committee to come up with a strategy to encourage more people to take the path that brought me to that New York courthouse 10 years ago.

Here's a good place to start: Scrap the civics and language tests.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

CNMI driver's license written test should be translated to Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino

Why should we incorporate Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino languages into the driver's license written tests? The written test for a driver's license is a means to enhance understanding of traffic regulations and driving safety through examination. The CNMI has a substantial population of residents from China, Japan, Korea, and the Philippines. Allowing qualified individuals to take the driver's license exam in their native languages can contribute to their comprehension of driving knowledge and legal requirements, thus improving road safety.

To determine whether this suggestion should be adopted, we can consider the following questions:

Will it lower the threshold for obtaining a driver's license and affect road safety?

No, it will not. The written test content concerning various road signs and symbols will continue to be in English, following the current format. Only content unrelated to road signs will be available in the respective native languages. This facilitates better understanding of legal requirements when answering questions.

There are no concerns in this regard. Current regulations already allow tourists to use their home country's driver's licenses in CNMI for a limited period (one month), indicating that local governments recognize the safety of licenses obtained in their home countries in their native languages.

Guam and many U.S. states have successfully implemented this for years.

Driver's licenses hold immense significance in daily life and work. Failing to pass the English language test may lead to bribery or even the purchase of counterfeit licenses. In case of accidents, insurance companies may deny compensation, causing harm to victims.

How do we implement the inclusion of native languages in the driver's license written tests? The written test paper will continue to use the current format, with no need for separate printing. However, a supplementary sheet with translations in native languages (excluding translations for English road signs) will be provided. This will help exam participants better understand the questions, while they will still answer on the English test paper.

As for when this should be implemented, this crucial change, which requires only a modest budget of a few hundred dollars, must be put in place before another tragedy occurs due to the purchase of counterfeit licenses.

Richard Peng
Via email

Trumpty Tales Tantamount to Truth

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.

Litany For A Lying Legacy # 11,780

Cast all political pimps votes with mine
Cast not votes with ethics and morals fine
Number 11,780 is important in U.S. history
It is important in Georgia state history
Important in POTUS 45 family history
In United States law school textbooks
In the annals of the Library of Congress
For all psychology and psychiatric students
In any discussion of the 21st century GOP
A number the world will view in disbelief
Showing 45 acting as a vote stealing thief
A Trumpian stain on American democracy
Part and parcel with Trump's kleptocracy
This is a low key litany of a liar's legacy.

POTUS 45—Damage Had Been Done

(Inspired by Pablo Neruda's poem, 'Someone,' "He trembled alone, between light and darkness")

He moved his mouth. He was president
His tweeting obsession had no precedent
He was often alone and in delusion

His lies expanded exponentially
In attempts to defend himself
He was a malignant narcissist

Mean spirited he denigrated others
Horrible days and nights of feral fear
Happened underneath his receding hair

His tweets went out to defend himself
Imagined fears and witch hunts appeared
He was a misogynist and womanizer

He hurt many women and married three
He harmed our American democracy.

LESSONS

From Page 8

"People are actually looking at Florida and asking the question, 'Why can't these states be more like Florida?'" he said at a news conference in Tallahassee.

Only months after that statement, the Republican-led Legislature, under the guise of securing elections, restricted Florida's mail-voting system, which has been a model for the country.

Senate Bill 90—the law DeSantis signed in front of Fox News cameras—forced voters to renew their vote-by-mail applications every election cycle, or two years. Previously, those applications were good for four years. In Miami-Dade County, 438,000 requests expired after the 2022 elections. So far, only 160,000 have been renewed ahead of this and next year's elections, according to the county Supervisor of Elections Office. This unnecessary change will catch many voters by surprise when they find out it's too late to vote by mail. The law also restricted mail-ballot drop boxes, among other measures.

Targeting nonprofits

DeSantis signed another law this year increasing fines for third-party voter registration groups that don't turn in voter forms in time while also giving them less time to do so. He banned non-citizens—even people in the country legally, such as green-card holders—from registering people to vote. Ironically, immigrants with green cards are allowed under federal law to donate money to political campaigns.

SB 7050 looks like a laser-focused attempt to undermine nonprofit organizations, such as the League of Women Voters or the NAACP, that often register voters in poor and immigrant communities. The law also prohibited those groups from keeping any voter information, a provision U.S. District Judge Mark Walker said was overly vague when he temporarily blocked portions of the law in July.

"It's like target practice," League of Women Voters of Florida co-President Cecile Scoon told the Herald Editorial Board.

With DeSantis' approval, lawmakers also tried to thwart the will of the voters who approved Amendment 4 to restore voting rights for some felons. The Legislature also gave him an elections crime police, which he then used to arrest felons whom his own administration didn't flag as ineligible to cast ballots.

Voting restrictions haven't been unique to Florida since 2020, but DeSantis' campaign touts our state as a model for the rest of the nation.

What would that look like?

When it comes to encouraging citizens to participate in our democracy, DeSantis' "Florida Blueprint" would make it harder, not easier.

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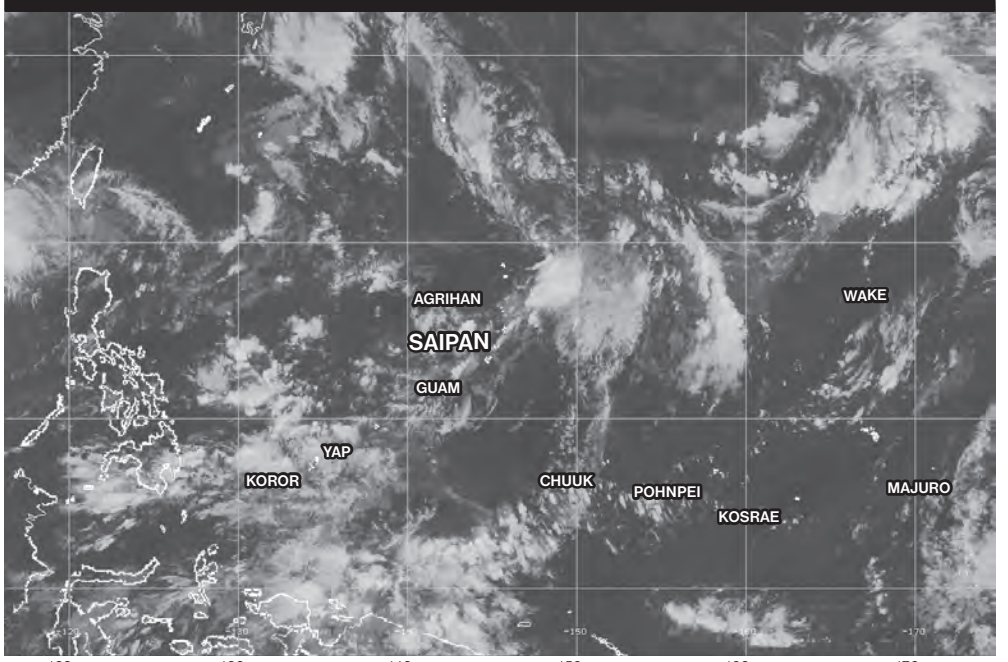
The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Cloudy	Scattered showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy	A 50 percent chance of showers. Mostly cloudy	A chance of showers. Partly sunny	A chance of showers. Partly sunny
86° 79°	86° 79°	86° 79°	87° 78°	89° 80°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:29 AM, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite shows mostly cloudy skies while radar indicates isolated showers moving through the Marianas Waters. The Ipan buoy reveals a 3 to 5 foot south swell, which is probably the 4 to 6 foot southwest swell in the computer model wave guidance, and includes some wind waves, and a much smaller east swell. This gives combined seas of 4 to 6 feet.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 77°
Yap	Thunderstorm	84° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	85° / 79°
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	85° / 76°
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	85° / 76°
Majuro	Thunderstorm	84° / 80°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:05 AM	6:22 PM
Tuesday	6:05 AM	6:21 PM
Wednesday	6:05 AM	6:20 PM
Thursday	6:05 AM	6:19 PM
Friday	6:05 AM	6:19 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	2:44 AM	4:05 PM	-
Tuesday	3:35 AM	4:46 PM	-
Wednesday	4:25 AM	5:23 PM	-
Thursday	5:13 AM	5:58 PM	-
Friday	6:00 AM	6:32 PM	-

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Showers	61° / 48°
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	82° / 57°
Hong Kong	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	87° / 76°
London	Mostly Sunny	66° / 46°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	79° / 67°
Manila	Thunderstorm	88° / 77°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	61° / 39°
Miami	Thunderstorm	86° / 78°
New York	Thunderstorm	92° / 73°
Osaka	Thunderstorm	88° / 81°
Paris	Rain	72° / 54°
Busan	Rain	75° / 70°
Rome	Sunny	84° / 64°
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	90° / 71°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	62° / 54°
Seoul	Rain	81° / 61°
Tokyo	Thunderstorm	88° / 79°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	94° / 76°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:17 AM	High Tide	1.58
11:40 AM	Low Tide	0.12
6:54 PM	High Tide	1.77
-	-	-

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily
UA156	7:10PM	7:55PM	1 up to Sep 4

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:25AM	9:55AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR 111	7:05AM	9:05AM	7
UA193	6:55PM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:15PM	9:10PM	Daily up to Sep 4
UA183	7:20PM	9:10PM	Daily from Sep 5

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/703	4:20AM	10:35PM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403/2305	4:45AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA117/183	9:50AM	9:10PM	Daily via Guam
UA117/193	9:50AM	10:55PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	3:15AM	7:00AM	Daily
OZ626	4:20AM	7:55AM	1, 4, 5, 7
7C3403	4:45AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:10PM	7:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

7C3451	3:20AM	6:30AM	1, 4, 5, 7

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:50AM	Daily
UA112	5:15PM	6:05PM	1 up to Sep 4

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	1:50AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:25PM	4:25AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA192	10:25PM	6:10AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
PR110	10:30PM	4:25AM+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
PR110	11:40PM	5:35AM+1	6
UA184	11:50PM	5:50AM+1	2, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ702/625	12:05PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
UA184/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
UA192/174	10:25PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
7C2306/3406	11:10PM	3:10PM+1	Daily
UA184/174	11:50PM	8:50AM+1	2, 5 via Guam

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	9:30AM	3:10PM	Daily
TW307	8:30PM	2:15AM+1	Daily
OZ625	9:25PM	2:55AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7
7C3404	10:10PM	3:40AM+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

7C3452	9:35PM	2:20AM+1	3, 4, 6, 7

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JUNE 1, 2022

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30	9:00	Daily
1302	11:00	11:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
1302	12:00	12:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
1303	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30	10:00	Daily
3102	13:00	13:30	Tues/Thurs/Sat/Sun
3102	14:00	14:30	Mon/Wed/Fri
3103	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

LIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	12:00	12:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Mon/Wed/Fri

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

NTT Docomo donates $46K to support Red Cross Typhoon Mawar relief efforts

TAMUNING, Guam—NTT Docomo, Inc. further supports American Red Cross Typhoon Mawar relief efforts through a monetary donation of $46,000.

The American Red Cross continues to play a crucial role in getting our community back on its feet by providing shelter, food, and relief supplies to those impacted by the typhoon.

"The American Red Cross Guam Chapter continues to thrive because of committed partners like NTT Docomo. We need businesses and individuals that believe in our mission so we can continue providing critical services in times of need," said American Red Cross Guam Chapter CEO Chita Blaise.

Recently, Docomo Pacific supported ARC's mission by donating 30 Samsung handsets and unlimited prepaid load to keep their teams connected.

To learn more about the American Cross of Guam Chapter and how you can help families affected by Typhoon Mawar, visit their website: https://www.redcross.org/local/guam.html or text the word TYPHOON to 90999 to make a $10 donation.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Marilyn Borja, EVP of Consumer Business Unit, Docomo Pacific; George Takagi, first vice chairman, ARC Guam Chapter; Marcus Fong, chairman of the board, ARC Guam Chapter; Karvin Flynn, treasurer, ARC Guam Chapter; Joaquin Cook, chief executive officer, Bank of Guam; Akira Fujibayashi, chief technology officer, Docomo Pacific; Roderick Boss, chief executive officer, Docomo Pacific; Chita Blaise, chief executive officer, ARC Guam Chapter; Jim Herbert, board member, ARC Guam Chapter; Robert Marks, board member, ARC Guam Chapter; Caroline Sablan, board member, ARC Guam Chapter; Rose Grino, board member, ARC Guam Chapter; and Monica Duenas, secretary, ARC Guam Chapter.

About NTT Docomo

NTT Docomo contributes to a sustainable society through the power of innovation. The company is a leading global technology company providing services to consumers and business as a mobile operator, infrastructure, networks, applications and consulting provider. Its offerings include digital business consulting, managed application services, workplace and cloud solutions, data center and edge computing—all supported by our deep global industry expertise. NTT Docomo has over $100 billion in revenue and 330,000 employees, with $3.6 billion in annual R&D investments. Its operations span across more than 80 countries and regions, allowing it to serve clients in over 190 of them. It serves over 75% of Fortune Global 100 companies, thousands of other enterprise and government clients, and millions of consumers.

About Docomo Pacific

Docomo Pacific is a wholly owned subsidiary of NTT Docomo, Japan's leading mobile operator. Headquartered in Tamuning, Guam, Docomo Pacific is the largest provider of personal, residential, enterprise connectivity and entertainment services in Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. The company is a seven-time winner of Best of The Pacific. Docomo Pacific is dedicated to bringing you and your family closer to the things that matter most. Get to know more about what makes us "Better Together" at www.docomopacific.com. ***(PR)***

BankPacific announces results of board of directorselection, declares record dividend

BankPacific shareholders voted Tricee Limtiaco, Tom Shimizu, and Jerold Filush to serve new three-year terms as members of the board of directors of BankPacific.

Following the meeting of the shareholders, all members of the board of directors voted to declare a record dividend to the bank's shareholders to be paid Sept. 5, 2023.

Filush

Limtiaco

Shimizu

Other board members include Bert Johnson, Kaz Endo, Mark Fish, and Philip Flores.

BankPacific is now in its 69th year of "Banking on the Pacific."

Offices are located in Guam, Saipan, and the Republic of Palau. ***(PR)***

United announces September Special Fare to Japan from Guam, Saipan

GUAM—United Airlines is offering a limited-time special fare on its direct routes to Japan from Guam and Saipan for travelers looking to enjoy a late summer trip to Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka, and Fukuoka.

From Guam, customers can enjoy roundtrip fares starting as low as $423 for Basic Economy and $455 for Standard Economy for a minimum stay of two days to a maximum stay of 14 days. Tickets are on sale until Sept. 11 for travel through Sept. 30.

United offers more than 80 nonstop weekly flights between Guam and Japan, which is more than any other airline. Customers in Guam can book this special fare immediately for all routes between Guam (GUM) and Japan—Narita/Tokyo (NRT), Chubu/Nagoya (NGO), Kansai/Osaka (KIX), and Fukuoka (FUK).

From Saipan (SPN), fares to NRT for travel during the same period start as low as $416 for Basic Economy and $451 for Standard Economy. Customers can book travel to Japan on United's nonstop service from SPN to NRT, which flies three times weekly on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Customers are encouraged to book their flights through united.com, the United app, through local travel agents, or at United's City Ticket Office in Tiyan, Guam.

United reminds customers that Early Check-in service is available for all Guam travelers who are leaving on early morning flights. Passengers can check in the night before their flights to avoid long lines at the airport. Early Check-in service is offered daily from 7:30pm to 9:30pm at the United counter at the A. B. Won Pat International Airport, Guam. ***(PR)***

NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION
P.O. BOX 500514, Saipan, MP 96950-0514
Email: nmhc@nmhc.gov.mp Website: http://www.cnmi-cdbgdr.com

INVITATION FOR BID (IFB)
NMHC IFB 2023-009

(This ad is paid by NMHC by HUD funds)

BID SUBMISSION DATE: September 13, 2023, 10:00 a.m.

Tinian Children's Park Improvement Project

Project Package will be available on August 14, 2023, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI holidays. A non-refundable payment of One-Hundred Dollars ($100.00) is required for each set of the project package. Payment must be made payable to NMHC and receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the project package at the reception counter.

The provisions on the NMHC Procurement regulations, NMIAC 100-60-725 AND 100-60-730 Prohibiting Gratuities, Kickbacks, and Contingent Fees shall apply.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held at the NMHC Field Office in Tinian located at the NMC Campus in Tinian on **August 25, 2023, 10:00 a.m.** In addition, a Mandatory site Visit/Inspection of the project site will be conducted immediately after the Pre-Bid Conference. Failure to attend both the Mandatory Pre-bid conference and the Mandatory site Visit/Inspection will be considered a non-responsive bidder.

For more information, contact Mr. Jacob Muna, Office Manager, at (670) 234-9447 or via email at officemanager@nmhcgov.net during business hours, 7:30am – 4:30pm Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ JESSE S. PALACIOS
Corporate Director

/s/ MERCED "MARCIE" M. TOMOKANE
Chairwoman
NMHC Board of Directors

ARTICLE OF DISSOLUTION OF
LIANGHONG CORPORATION
TEL: (670) 235-8611

Lianghong Corporation, a CNMI Company/Corporation. Does Hereby Certify Lianghong Corporation as follow:

First: That dissolution was authorized by the company on August 31, 2023.

Second: That dissolution has been authorized in accordance with the provisions of Chapter 14, Subchapter A, Section 14.02 of the CNMI Corporation regulations.

Third: That process maybe serve against the corporation at the following address: PMB 1317 Box 10003 Saipan MP 96950.

Fourth: That a resolution proposing dissolution has been adopted and approved by the majority of the shareholders.

Fifth: That number votes can be cast and two votes were cast in favor of this dissolution.

In Witness Whereof Said, Lianghong Corporation has caused this articles of dissolution to be signed by the following Board of Directors at this 31st day of August, 2023.

Approved by:

/s/ Lifang Liang
(President/Vice-president)

/s/ Lina Liang
(Secretary/ Treasurer)

SISTER REMEDIOS BUILDING FACILITY FOR RENT

Available for rent is a two-storey building (semi-concrete), the MMB Sister Remedios Building in Chalan Kanoa #2. Building size is approximately 155 ft. x 42 ft. with stairs, common areas and restrooms. First and second floor (approximately 6,000 square feet each floor) and common exterior areas. Parking lot has 32 stalls including two disability access spaces. Additional area may be available for playground/activity area. Several used split a/c units are in-place from former tenants. Smal water-tank available. 5 separate CUC power meters. Building has network wiring in-place.

Suitable and acceptable uses include office space, church, (business) non-profit organization; school; daycare and early childhood/preschool facility. Not suitable for other purposes such as poker room; bar or other inappropriate businesses. Fenced and gated perimeter. Rear Annex building may be available, depending on proposal for rent/lease of the entire premises (approximately 7,000 square meters).

Minimum Terms: Minimum three (3) year lease (longer term may be available). Tenant is responsible for maintenance and repairs of the building/property. Asking $5,000.00 per month/ negotiable.

To schedule an appointment to meet and discuss, please contact: Law Office of Robert T. Torres, counsel for Mercederian Missionaries of Berriz (MMB) at rttlaw@gmail.com or Whatsapp/Text: 287-7859.

NOTICE: Inspections/ Walk-through by MMB-authorized appointment only.

Nation

Updated COVID-19 shots are coming

» They're part of a trio of vaccines to block fall viruses

AP

Syringes with vaccines are prepared at the L.A. Care and Blue Shield of California Promise Health Plans' Community Resource Center where they were offering members and the public free flu and COVID-19 vaccines Oct. 28, 2022, in Lynwood, Calif.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Updated COVID-19 vaccines are coming soon, just in time to pair them with flu shots. And this fall, the first vaccines for another scary virus called RSV are rolling out to older adults and pregnant women.

Doctors hope enough people get vaccinated to help avert another "tripledemic" like last year when hospitals were overwhelmed with an early flu season, an onslaught of RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, and yet another winter coronavirus surge.

COVID-19 hospitalizations have been steadily increasing since late summer, although not nearly as much as this time last year, and RSV already is on the rise in parts of the Southeast.

Approval of updated COVID-19 shots is expected within days. They are among the tools the new director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says will help put the U.S. in "our strongest position yet" to avoid another chaotic respiratory season.

"There will be a lot of virus this winter. That's why we want to get ahead of it," CDC chief Dr. Mandy Cohen said.

Here is what you need to know about fall vaccinations:

WHY MORE COVID-19 SHOTS?

The ever-evolving coronavirus isn't going away. Similar to how flu shots are updated each year, the Food and Drug Administration gave COVID-19 vaccine makers a new recipe for this fall.

The updated shots have a single target, an omicron descendant named XBB.1.5. It's a big change. The COVID-19 vaccines offered since last year are combination shots targeting the original coronavirus strain and a much earlier omicron version, making them very outdated.

Pfizer, Moderna and Novavax all have brewed new supplies.

The FDA will soon decide if each company has met safety, effectiveness and quality standards. Then the CDC must sign off before vaccinations begin. A CDC advisory panel is set to meet Tuesday to make recommendations on how best to use the latest shots.

Earlier this month, European regulators authorized Pfizer's updated vaccine for this fall, for adults and children as young as 6 months.

WILL THEY BE EFFECTIVE ENOUGH?

Health officials are optimistic, barring a new mutant.

As expected, XBB.1.5 has faded away in the months it took to tweak the vaccine. Today, there is a soup of different coronavirus variants causing illness and the most common ones are fairly close relatives. Recent lab testing from vaccine makers and other research groups suggest the updated shots will offer crossover protection.

Earlier vaccinations or infections have continued to help prevent severe disease and death but protection wanes over time, especially against milder infections as the virus continually evolves. While the FDA did allow seniors and others at high risk to get an extra booster dose last spring, most Americans haven't had a vaccination in about a year.

"The best thing people can do to maintain a normal way of life is to continue to get their booster shots," said Duke University vaccine expert David Montefiori.

WHO ALSO NEEDS A FLU VACCINE?

The CDC urges a yearly flu shot for pretty much everyone ages 6 months and up. The best time is by the end of October.

Like with COVID-19, influenza can be especially dangerous to certain groups including the very young, older people and those with weak immune systems and lung or heart disease.

There are multiple kinds of flu vaccines to choose from, including a nasal spray version for certain younger people. More important, there are three shots specifically recommended for seniors to choose from because they are proven to do a better job revving up an older adult's immune system.

CAN I GET A FLU SHOT AND COVID-19 SHOT AT THE SAME TIME?

Yes.

The CDC says there is no difference in effectiveness or side effects if people get those vaccines simultaneously, although one in each arm might be more comfortable.

WHAT IS THIS NEW RSV VACCINE?

RSV is a cold-like nuisance for most people, and not as well-known as the flu. But RSV packs hospitals every winter and can be deadly for children under 5, the elderly and people with certain high-risk health problems. Most notorious for inflaming babies' tiny airways, leaving them wheezing, it's also a common cause of pneumonia in seniors.

RSV vaccines from GSK and Pfizer are approved for adults 60 and older. The CDC is advising seniors to ask their doctor if they should get the one-dose shot.

IRS plans to crack down on 1,600 millionaires

WASHINGTON (AP)—The IRS announced on Friday it is launching an effort to aggressively pursue 1,600 millionaires and 75 large business partnerships that owe hundreds of millions of dollars in past due taxes.

IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel said that with a boost in federal funding and the help of artificial intelligence tools, the agency has new means of targeting wealthy people who have "cut corners" on their taxes.

"If you pay your taxes on time it should be particularly frustrating when you see that wealthy filers are not," Werfel told reporters in a call previewing the announcement. He said 1,600 millionaires who owe at least $250,000 each in back taxes and 75 large business partnerships that have assets of roughly $10 billion on average are targeted for the new "compliance efforts."

Werfel said a massive hiring effort and AI research tools developed by IRS employees and contractors are playing a big role in identifying wealthy tax dodgers. The agency is making an effort to showcase positive results from its burst of new funding under President Joe Biden's Democratic administration as Republicans in Congress look to claw back some of that money.

"New tools are helping us see patterns and trends that we could not see before, and as a result, we have higher confidence on where to look and find where large partnerships are shielding income," he said.

In July, IRS leadership said it collected $38 million in delinquent taxes from more than 175 high-income taxpayers in the span of a few months. Now, the agency will scale up that effort, Werfel said.

"The IRS will have dozens of revenue officers focused on these high-end collection cases in fiscal year 2024," he said.

A team of academic economists and IRS researchers in 2021 found that the top 1% of U.S. income earners fail to report more than 20% of their earnings to the IRS.

The newly announced tax collection effort will begin as soon as October. "We have more hiring to do," Werfel said. "It's going to be a very busy fall for us."

Grover Norquist, who heads the conservative Americans for Tax Reform, said the IRS' plan to pursue high wealth individuals does not preclude the IRS from eventually pursuing middle-income Americans for audits down the road.

"This power and these resources allow them to go after anyone they want," he said. "The next step is to go after anyone they wish to target for political purposes."

Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said the IRS' new plan is a "big deal" that "represents a fresh approach to taking on sophisticated tax cheats."

"This action goes to the heart of Democrats' effort to ensure the wealthiest are paying their fair share," he said in a statement.

David Williams, at the right-leaning, nonprofit Taxpayers Protection Alliance, said "every business and every person should pay their taxes—full stop." However, "I just hope this isn't used as a justification to hire thousands of new agents," that would audit Americans en masse, he said.

Number of people missing from Maui wildfires drop to 66

HONOLULU (AP)—One month after the deadliest U.S. wildfire in more than a century leveled the historic town of Lahaina, Hawaii Gov. Josh Green said Friday that the number of missing has dropped to 66, the confirmed death toll remains at 115 and authorities will soon escort residents on visits to their property.

Tens of millions of dollars in aid will make its way to families and businesses as they recover, Green said, and beginning Oct. 8, travel restrictions will end and West Maui will reopen to visitors.

"If we support Maui's economy and keep our people employed, they will heal faster and continue to afford to live on Maui," Green said.

Donations from around the world have poured in to the American Red Cross, the Hawaii Community Foundation, the Maui United Way and other organizations, Green said, and he has authorized $100 million from the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program "to support what others donate, magnifying the power of their generosity."

The government is also making $25 million available to help businesses survive, distributed in grants of $10,000 to $20,000, he said.

The Aug. 8 fire started in the hills above the historic oceanfront town. Within hours it spread through single-family homes and apartment buildings, quaint city streets, art galleries and restaurants, destroying more than 2,000 structures. Dozens of people fled to the ocean seeking refuge from the flames. The blaze is estimated to have caused $5.5 billion in damage.

The new tally of 66 people still missing represents a significant drop from a week earlier, when authorities said 385 remained unaccounted for.

So far, Maui police have released the names of 55 of the dead. Of those, 22 were in their 70s, with another 13 in their 60s. There was one listed victim under the age of 10.

With about half the deceased still unidentified, Green said he expected there to be significant overlap between the names on the missing list and remains that have already been recovered. Therefore, he said, he did not expect the death toll to rise considerably.

"We're starting to see that the universe of 115 fatalities is about where we are," Green said. "There may be some additional fatalities as we go through the next month."

The Maui Police Department said Friday that in addition to the 66 people listed by the FBI as unaccounted for, there are 80 additional names of potentially missing people that the agency is vetting for credibility. In those cases, no information was provided for the reporting party or the reporting party was not available to provide further details.

The governor said that in the coming weeks, authorities will begin to schedule supervised visits for residents to return to and view their properties. People will have to be careful as they visit, he said, because the ash is toxic.

Hawaii Attorney General Anne Lopez said she would use her subpoena powers, if necessary, to compel cooperation from state and county employees as her office probes the wildfire and will get answers so there are "guardrails in place for the future so it doesn't happen again."

Green said some state employees have been asked to go to Washington, D.C., to testify at congressional hearings on the wildfire, including Hawaii's director of energy and some Public Utility Commission personnel.

Asia

Australia, PH strengthen ties as South China Sea disputes heat up

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Australia and the Philippines elevated their seven-decade ties to a strategic level Friday to broaden an alliance underpinned by their rejection of China's increasingly provocative actions in the disputed South China Sea.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Philippine Ferdinand Marcos signed the pact upgrading their ties in Manila. They also agreed to hold an annual meeting of their defense chiefs.

Aside from an aim to further boost trade and economic engagement, Albanese said their countries "have common views about the need to uphold international law, and Australia's position on that will continue to be consistent, as we have always been, including recently over issues relating to the South China Sea."

China and the Philippines, along with Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei, have been locked in a decadeslong territorial standoff in the disputed waterway. It's a key passageway for global trade and is regarded as an Asian flashpoint.

It's also where China has repeatedly had tense face-offs with Philippines vessels.

Marcos said he and Albanese "acknowledge that our shared values, the democratic principles and mutual respect for international law, have been instrumental in fostering a strong partnership."

"Our commitment to these ideals has guided our path forward as we address the complex challenges facing our region and the world at large," Marcos said.

In just-concluded summit talks attended by Albanese, Marcos, and several other Western and Asian leaders Thursday in the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, the Australian premier underscored Canberra's recognition of — and the need to uphold — a 2016 arbitration ruling by a tribunal set up under the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea that invalidated China's expansive territorial claims in the South China Sea on historical grounds.

The Philippines sought the arbitration after China forcibly took control of a disputed shoal after a tense 2012 sea standoff. China did not participate in the arbitration, rejected its outcome as a sham, and continues to violate it.

Marcos thanked Albanese for renewing Australia's position during the Jakarta summit talks, where Chinese Premier Li Qiang was also in attendance.

"You have made very clear that the claims that are being made upon our Philippine maritime territory are not valid and have not been recognized, and not in conjunction or consistent with international law," Marcos said. "To have friends like you and partners like you, especially on that subject, is very gratifying and encourages us to continue down that path."

Australia, along with the United States and Japan, immediately condemned an Aug. 5 action by a Chinese coast guard ship that used a water cannon to block a Philippine boat delivering food and other supplies to Filipino forces stationed at the Second Thomas Shoal.

China also claims the atoll and has surrounded it with Chinese coast guard ships and militia vessels in a yearslong standoff.

Kim hosts Chinese, Russian guests at parade celebrating North Korea's 75th anniversary

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea invited visiting Chinese delegates and Russian artists to a paramilitary parade featuring rocket launchers pulled by trucks and tractors, state media said Saturday, in leader Kim Jong Un's latest effort to display his ties with Moscow and Beijing in the face of deepening confrontations with Washington.

The event in the capital, Pyongyang, which began Friday night to celebrate North Korea's 75th founding anniversary that fell on Saturday, came amid expectations that Kim will travel to Russia soon for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin that could focus on North Korean arm sales to refill reserves drained by the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

While China has sent a delegation led by Vice Premier Liu Guozhong to the North Korea's anniversary celebrations, Russia sent a military song and dance group.

South Korean media speculated that the lack of Russian government officials at the festivities in Pyongyang could be related to preparations for a summit between Kim and Putin, which Washington expects within the month. According to some U.S. reports, it could happen as early as next week.

Putin is expected to attend an international forum that runs from Sunday to Wednesday in the eastern city of Vladivostok, which was also the site of his first summit with Kim in 2019 and is now seen as a possible venue for their next meeting. South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers in a closed-door briefing Thursday that North Korea and Russia could also be arranging an unexpected "surprise" route for Kim's visit to avoid potential venues reported by the media.

North Korea has not confirmed any plans for Kim to visit Russia.

"Whether or not a Putin-Kim summit soon follows, the United States is attempting to deter serious violations of international law by preemptively releasing intelligence," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

The growing cooperation between China, Russia and North Korea, and Chinese President Xi Jinping's decision to skip the Group of 20 Summit in India, give the appearance of a widening fissure in Asia's geopolitical landscape, he said.

Still, a major Russia-North Korea arms deal, which would breach numerous international sanctions, should worry Beijing because "association with an emerging pariah state bloc could have negative repercussions for China's globalized but struggling economy," Easley said.

KCNA said Kim received letters from Putin and Xi on the anniversary, where both leaders said that their countries' strengthening ties with North Korea would contribute to the region's peace and stability.

Saturday's parade was centered around paramilitary organizations and public security forces protecting Pyongyang, rather than the military units that handle his nuclear-capable weapons systems, which have been the focus of other parades this year.

World

UN atomic watchdog warns of threat to nuclear safety

KYIV, Ukraine (AP)—The United Nations atomic watchdog warned of a potential threat to nuclear safety from a spike in fighting near Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Ukraine, whose forces continued pressing their counteroffensive on Saturday.

AP

In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, people work to extinguish a fire following a Russian attack in Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine, Friday, Sept. 8, 2023.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said its experts deployed at the Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant reported hearing numerous explosions over the past week, in a possible indication of increased military activity in the region. There was no damage to the plant.

"I remain deeply concerned about the possible dangers facing the plant at this time of heightened military tension in the region," IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi warned in a statement issued late Friday.

He noted that the IAEA team was informed that staff at the nuclear power plant had been reduced temporarily to minimum levels due to concerns of more military activity in the area.

"Whatever happens in a conflict zone, wherever it may be, everybody would stand to lose from a nuclear accident, and I urge that all necessary precautions must be taken to avoid it happening," Grossi said.

The IAEA has repeatedly expressed concern that the fighting could cause a potential radiation leak from the facility, which is one of the world's 10 biggest nuclear power stations. The plant's six reactors have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features.

As Ukrainian forces pressed to expand their gains after recently capturing the village of Robotyne in the Zaporizhzhia region, the U.K. Defense Ministry noted in its latest report that Russia has brought in reinforcements to stymie the Ukrainian advances.

"It is highly likely that Russia has redeployed forces from other areas of the frontline to replace degraded units around Robotyne," it said. "These redeployments are likely limiting Russia's ability to carry out offensive operations of its own along other areas of the front line."

The Washington-based Institute for the Study of War noted that the Russian military has made notable changes to its command and control structure to "protect command infrastructure and improve information sharing."

Russian forces have continued their barrage across Ukraine. The regional authorities in the northeastern region of Sumy that borders Russia said that the latest Russian shelling left four people wounded, one of whom later died in a hospital.

WORLD BRIEFS

Greek authorities say 77-year-old man is 11th victim of flooding

ATHENS, Greece (AP)—The body of a missing 77-year-old man was found Saturday, raising the death toll from floods in central Greece to 11, authorities said. The number of missing increased to six, but there could be more. The man was living in the seaside village of Paltsi, in the mountainous Pelion peninsula situated between the Aegean Sea to the east and Pagasitikos gulf to the west. He had refused to leave his home, despite the entreaties of his wife, who evacuated. "I have been through storms," he had told her. The man's body drifted in the Aegean, past the island of Skiathos, to another island, Evia, where it was found late Saturday, authorities said. Pelion was hit by torrential rains first on Tuesday, with some locations reporting close to 30 inches of rain in less than a day. The rest of the region of Thessaly, to the west, was struck later Tuesday and on Wednesday and Thursday. Another village near a major Greek city was ordered evacuated Saturday afternoon as authorities frantically shored up flood defenses against a rising river. Rescue crews were evacuating stranded residents from areas already flooded elsewhere in Thessaly.

Hurricane Lee barrels through open Atlantic waters

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Hurricane Lee charged through warm Atlantic waters Friday night and threatened to unleash heavy swells across the northeast Caribbean. It became the season's first Category 5 storm before beginning to weaken. Down to a Category 3 hurricane by late Friday, it was not expected to make landfall, but meteorologists warned it would generate dangerous waves of up to 15 feet (5 meters) across the northern coast of Puerto Rico and other nearby islands. Lee was on a path that would take it a couple hundred miles (kilometers) northeast of the Caribbean, and tropical storm conditions were not forecast for the region. "Although the hurricane is incredibly powerful, its wind field is not particularly large," the National Hurricane Center said. The hurricane was centered about 440 miles (705 kilometers) east of the northern Leeward Islands late Friday. It had maximum sustained winds of 115 miles per hour (185 kilometers per hour) and was moving west-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph). "Fluctuations in intensity like what has occurred this morning are not uncommon in intense hurricanes," the center said.

Health & Wellness

The fall virus season is approaching. Which vaccines should you get?

By CINDY KRISCHER GOODMAN
SOUTH FLORIDA SUN SENTINEL

A new COVID variant is circulating. Flu season is about to begin. Respiratory syncytial virus (known as RSV) is becoming a greater cause of hospitalizations.

But this fall, something is different. The country has new vaccines for COVID, influenza and RSV, the three fall respiratory viruses that hospitalize and kill hundreds of thousands annually.

"Go get those vaccines and it will make a dramatic difference in your getting sick this winter," Dr. Ashish Jha, former White House COVID response coordinator told NPR. "We are going to be dealing with respiratory viruses forever but we are getting better at building treatments and vaccines. No one loves getting shots but these shots are literally saving lives."

Here's a guide to fall vaccines, how to time them right, and where they are available.

Seasonal influenza (flu)

Doctors recommend an annual flu shot before the start of the season. In Florida, the 2022–23 flu season began in early October and went through May 20.

What's new this year: Each year the influenza vaccine is reformulated, but it doesn't always match perfectly with the circulating virus. Katelyn Jetelina, founder of Your Local Epidemiologist, a viral newsletter, says she is optimistic that this year's is a good match because the vaccine composition matches flu strains that recently circulated in Australia, which tends to be a predictor of what happens in the United States.

Who should get it: Everyone ages 6 months and older is eligible for the basic flu vaccine.

For those over 65, there is a high-dose influenza vaccine specially formulated to provide added protection to older adults. (AARP estimates that 70% to 85% of flu-related deaths and 50% to 70% of flu-related hospitalizations occur in people 65 and older.)

Bianca Perez at CVS Minute Clinic in Miramar said she also administers a specially formulated flu shot for people 50 to 64. "We have all three types at the Minute Clinic but it depends on insurance. Some don't cover this one."

The American Academy of Pediatrics urges all children over 6 months to get vaccinated and wants to see at least 70% immunized. Last year only about 55% were vaccinated.

"We know for children under age 5, influenza is unpredictable, it can be very serious, it leads a lot of children into the hospital and unfortunately we see tragic pediatric flu deaths every year," said Dr. Jennifer Ashton, a medical expert for Good Morning America. "We are encouraging those young children to get vaccinated starting now until the end of October."

When is the optimal timing: Pharmacies and doctors' offices in Florida already have the flu shot in stock. However, you don't want to get your shot too early and see your immunity wane before flu activity peaks. For most people, early October is the best time to get vaccinated so you have protection before the season fully kicks in, yet can keep your immunity until it ends, experts say. When timing your shot, consider it takes about two weeks after being vaccinated before you develop peak level of antibodies.

What else to know: You can get a flu shot at the same time as a COVID booster. Some Florida pharmacies offer coupons when you get vaccinated. CVS pharmacies and clinics are offering $5 off a $20 store purchase with a flu shot. At the CVS pharmacies in Target you can use your coupon at any Target store.

"I am hoping this year we will have an uptick in people who get a flu vaccine," Perez said. "We even had flu in Florida in the middle of summer which was rare. We had a very sick summer, and if that's any precursor of what's to come in the fall, it's going to be a sick winter as well."

COVID-19 vaccine

What's new this year: The fall COVID-19 booster will have an updated formula targeting the newer omicron variant, XBB.1.5. Moderna, Pfizer, and Novavax all plan to have boosters on the market this fall. The exact timing hasn't been released but CDC director Mandy Cohen has said the booster should be available for most people by the third or fourth week of September.

While vaccine makers have been manufacturing updated vaccines that target XBB to ensure enough doses are ready by the fall and winter season, several new variants emerged. One of those new variants, BA.2.86, also known as "Pirola," appears more likely to infect people who have been vaccinated or have had previous infections. So how much protection will the booster give you? The manufacturers say early findings indicate that because the newer variants are still part of the Omicron family, the vaccines made to target XBB should still be effective against them, and the booster should offer some protection against BA.2.86

Who should get it: The CDC will determine who is eligible after the FDA fully approves the vaccine. The FDA can only fully approve it once the manufacturers submit data showing the vaccines are safe.

Last year, though, eligibility was dependent on the manufacturer, and it will likely be the same this year: Moderna: 6 months and older; Pfizer: 6 months and older; Novavax: 18 years and older.

Experts clash over who should get a COVID booster and who doesn't really need to get one. There's wide agreement that older adults should get one as well as people younger than 65 who have chronic conditions.

An FDA official said this week that for people ages 65 and older, an additional shot may be "reasonable" a few months after the first.

Jha, who has returned to Brown University's School of Public Health, said he believes children should get a COVID booster. "Kids still can get sick from COVID. When they get vaccines they are less likely to get sick and miss school," he told NPR. I want them in school … that's why my kids are going to get a COVID and flu vaccine. It just keeps them healthier."

When is the optimal timing: The ideal timing for each person is different depending on when you had your last booster, were infected with COVID, or want to get the most protection. Keep in mind that protection wanes after a few months so it makes sense to time your next shot to last into the winter.

What else to know: This fall season, the federal government is not paying for the vaccines and a program to provide them to uninsured people probably won't launch until mid-October.

Getting the booster in the same arm as your last COVID-19 shot may slightly boost your immune response, according to a study published in the journal eBioMedicine. Also, if you have had COVID recently, you will want to wait 90 days before getting the new COVID booster.

RSV vaccine

What is new this year: For the first time, an RSV vaccine is available for people 60 and older, and from two manufacturers — GSK and Pfizer. Both effectively protect against severe illness, with up to 89% efficacy. The two vaccines are slightly different in design: The Pfizer vaccine, called Abrysvo, was 89% effective in clinical trials at preventing lower respiratory symptoms while the GSK vaccine, called Arexvy, was 83% effective. Experts believe the vaccine will need to be given every two years.

Who should get it: People ages 60 and older "may" get the vaccine in the U.S. The CDC advises people to consult with their doctor. Someone with underlying health conditions (like heart or lung disease or diabetes) and those living in long-term care facilities should strongly consider the vaccine, CDC guidance says.

When is the optimal timing: RSV vaccines do not wane like flu and COVID-19 vaccines, so getting one now should protect you throughout the entire season and most likely next season, too. The RSV vaccines are available at doctors' offices and some pharmacies, including Walgreens and CVS, this fall.

Special consideration: Pregnant woman may be able to get the RSV vaccine. Because babies tend to get RSV, the FDA has approved giving the Pfizer vaccine to pregnant women so they will pass on antibodies to their babies through the placenta. The vaccine is recommended to be given between 32 to 36 weeks of pregnancy.

What else to know: Medicare Part D covers the RSV vaccine, but some private health insurance plans don't.

Combining vaccines

There is not a combined vaccine for all three viruses, so if you want to be fully vaccinated, you will need three shots. While it may be more convenient to get three on the same day, the safety risks haven't been studied. So far, what has been proved safe is flu and COVID shots at the same time. Clinical trials for the RSV vaccine found that when it's given at the same time as a flu shot, there were rare instances of severe side effects.

Other vaccines

Shingles: This virus causes a painful rash in which the pain can last for months or even years after the rash goes away. Your risk of getting shingles increases as you get older. Adults 50 years and older should get two doses of Shingrix, separated by two to six months.

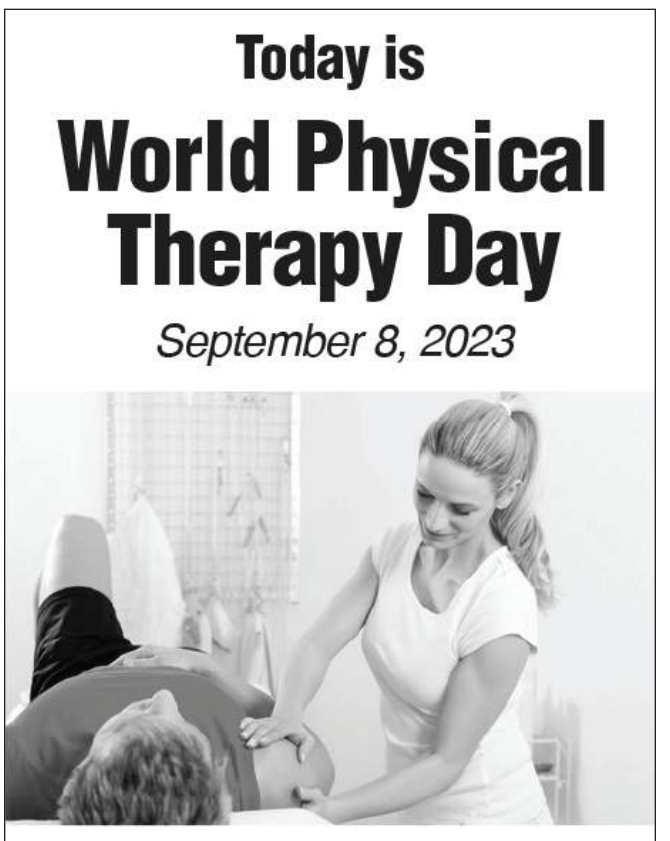
Pneumococcal vaccine: There are two kinds of pneumococcal vaccines available in the United States with new formulations. The shots are recommended for adults 65 or older and for all babies and children younger than 5 years old. "If you get one this year and a second a year later, you are good for five years," said Perez at CVS Minute Clinic.

Each of the above vaccines can be combined with the flu shot if given in different arms, she said.

Health experts recommend waiting at least seven days between the shingles vaccine and a COVID-19 vaccine, so that if you have any side effects you will know which vaccine they were from.

TNS

Bianca Perez, nurse practitioner at CVS Minute Clinic in Miramar, Florida, administers a flu vaccine to Giselle Castillo-Righton of Miramar on Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023


Today is
World Physical Therapy Day
September 8, 2023
Physical therapists help people of all ages stay active and mobile through advice and exercise programs. World Physical Therapy Day is a day "for physical therapists from all over the world to raise awareness about the crucial contribution the profession makes to keeping people well, mobile, and independent."
Source: Checkiday.com
Graphic: Staff, TNS

Life & Style

Kutcher, Kunis apologize for 'pain' letters on behalf of Danny Masterson caused

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ashton Kutcher and Mila Kunis apologized Saturday for character letters the celebrity couple wrote on behalf of fellow "That '70s Show" actor Danny Masterson before he was sentenced for rape this week.

A judge in Los Angeles on Thursday sentenced Masterson to 30 years to life in prison for raping two women in 2003.

In a video posted on Instagram, Kutcher and Kunis said they were sorry for the pain they may have caused with the letters, which were made public Friday.

Kutcher said the letters that asked for leniency "were intended for the judge to read and not to undermine the testimony of the victims or retraumatize them in any way. We would never want to do that and we're sorry if that has taken place."

Kutcher said Masterson's family approached them after the actor was convicted in the rapes in May and asked them to write character letters describing "the person that we knew for 25 years." The letters were posted online by The Hollywood Reporter and other digital publications.

AP

Ashton Kutcher, left, and Mila Kunis arrive at the Oscars on Sunday, March 27, 2022, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

Masterson starred with Ashton Kutcher, Mila Kunis and Topher Grace in "That '70s Show" from 1998 until 2006.

He had reunited with Kutcher on the 2016 Netflix comedy "The Ranch," but was written off the show when the Los Angeles Police Department investigation was revealed the following year.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Charlaine F. Olmedo handed down the sentence to Masterson, 47, after hearing statements from the women, and pleas for fairness from defense attorneys.

Kutcher described Masterson as a man who treated people "with decency, equality, and generosity," he wrote in his letter dated July 27, 2023.

Kunis in her letter to Olmedo called Masterson "an outstanding role model and friend" and an "exceptional older brother figure."

Both rapes took place in Masterson's Hollywood-area home in 2003 when he was at the height of his fame on the Fox network sitcom "That '70s Show." The victims testified that Masterson drugged them before violently raping them.

Emma Stone-led 'Poor Things' wins top prize at 80th Venice Film Festival

ROME (AP)—"Poor Things," a film about Victorian-era female empowerment, won the Golden Lion on Saturday at a Venice Film Festival largely deprived of Hollywood glamour because of the writers and actors strikes.

The film, starring Emma Stone, won the top prize at the 80th edition of the festival, which is often a predictor of Oscar glory. Receiving the award, director Yorgos Lanthimos said the film wouldn't exist without Stone, who was also a producer but was not on the Lido for the festival.

"This film is her, in front and behind the camera," Lanthimos said.

The film, based on Alasdair Gray's 1992 novel of the same name, tells the tale of Bella Baxter, who is brought back to life by a scientist and, after a whirlwind learning curve, runs off with a sleazy lawyer and embarks on a series of adventures devoid of the societal judgements of the era.

Other top winners on the Lido were two films shaming Europe for its migration policies.

AP

Greek director Yorgos Lanthimos poses with the 'Golden Lion' award for the best film 'Poor Things' during the closing ceremony for the 80th edition of the Venice Film Festival in Venice, Italy, Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023.

"Io Capitano," (Me Captain) by Matteo Garrone, won the award for best director while Garrone's young star, Seydou Sarr, won the award for best young actor. The film tells the story of two young boys' odyssey from Dakar, Senegal, to the detention camps in Libya and finally across the Mediterranean to Europe.

Agnieszka Holland's "Green Border," about Europe's other migration crisis on the Polish-Belarus border, won the Special Jury Prize.

"People are still hiding in forests, deprived of their dignity, of their human rights, of their safety, and some of them will lose their lives here in Europe," Holland told the audience. "Not because we don't have the resources to help them but because we don't want to."

From piñata to postage stamp, US celebrates centuries-old Hispanic tradition

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. (AP)—The U.S. Postal Service on Friday rolled out its latest special edition postage stamps, paying homage to a tradition with global roots that has evolved over centuries to become a universal symbol of celebration.

The release of four new stamps featuring colorful piñatas coincides with a monthlong recognition of Hispanic heritage in the U.S. and the start of an annual festival in New Mexico where the handmade party favorites are cracked open hourly and children can learn the art of pasting together their own creations.

Piñatas are synonymous with parties, although their history is layered and can be traced to 16th century trade routes between Latin America and Asia and the efforts of Spanish missionaries to convert Indigenous communities to Christianity. It was through dance, music and the arts — including the making of piñatas — that biblical stories were spread throughout the New World.

Piñatas became a key part of celebrating Las Posadas — the festivities held each December in Mexico and other Latin American countries to mark the birth of Christ. The religious origins are evident in the classic piñata designs of the seven-point star and the burro, or donkey, said Cesáreo Moreno, chief curator at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago.

"Those early missionaries really were creative in the ways in which they wanted to teach the biblical stories to the Indigenous people," Moreno said. "Nativity scenes, piñatas, posadas—all those things really worked well. They worked so well that they became a part of the popular culture of Mexico."

Teen's mischievous side upsets her grandmother

DEAR ABBY: I generally have an excellent relationship with my 14-year-old granddaughter. However, she thinks it's funny to tell me outrageous lies with a straight face to see if she can get me to believe them. She laughs when I am unsure of whether she is telling the truth.

Once she told me her family was going to Hawaii for a month (she lives with her father rather than with my daughter, so I'm not privy to his plans). Another time, she jerked her arms around and said she has "tics." When I asked what she was talking about, she announced she had Tourette's syndrome.

Both were untrue. I had epilepsy as a teenager, so I'm especially sensitive about a grandchild developing a neurological condition at the age I was. It felt like a cruel thing for her to do to me, and I was not amused. When I told her I didn't like it, she giggled and said, "Oh, Grandma!"

I had arranged for her to do weekly yard work for me, but now I'm having second thoughts about having her around that often if she's going to purposely upset me like that. I sent a text to her mother telling her about it, but received no response indicating she would talk to her daughter about it or have her apologize. What should I do?

HUMORLESS IN IOWA

DEAR HUMORLESS: Try this: Tell your granddaughter you have bought tickets to a Taylor Swift or Harry Styles concert and ask if she would like to go with you. Then, when she reacts, start laughing.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I'm a woman in my late 30s. I live in the Midwest, where towns can be conservative, and residents tend to be judgmental. For as long as I can remember, I have always found people of both sexes to be attractive. I don't act on it because I am married to a straight man I love and plan to stay with for as long as he'll have me.

During the last year, I admitted to him that I am bisexual. He said he has wondered, but loves me regardless. Do I need to disclose this information to family? I have no intention of telling my co-workers, as they are mostly female and I don't want to create awkwardness.

I recently bought a T-shirt that says "Why Not Both?" and I would love to wear it. But I'm concerned about being judged or not taken seriously when, and if, I get asked about my shirt. What do you think? Am I making it a bigger deal than it needs to be? If I wear the shirt around family, should I tell them the truth if they ask?

BI IN INDIANA

DEAR BI: Wear that shirt only when you are ready to come out because, once you put it on, you are sure to be asked about it. Being bisexual does not mean that a person is attracted to every person they encounter. As a married woman, you have made your choice about the gender of your partner and will (presumably) remain faithful. Should you divorce, your next partner may be a woman—or another man. (Who knows?) I see no reason to disclose your bisexuality to your family unless you are ready to make it common knowledge.

■■■

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby -- Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY
BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

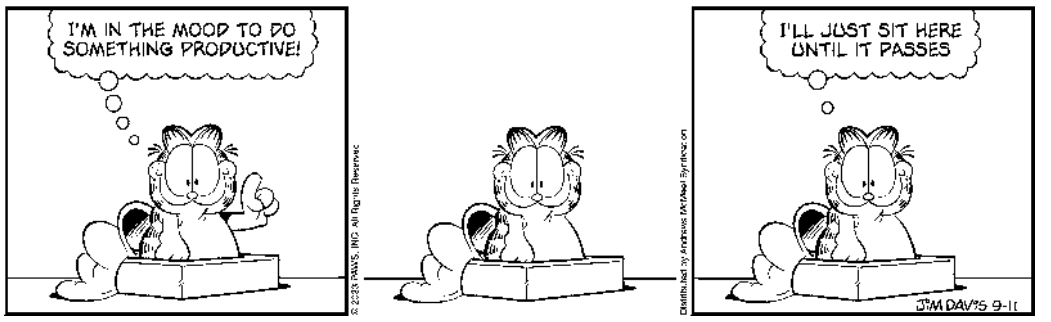
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

WHAT A DAY. I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN RUN OVER BY A TRAIN.
KAPOW!
I MEAN, NOW I FEEL LIKE THAT.
SEE? YOU SHOULD ALWAYS SAVE HYPERBOLE UNTIL YOU REALLY NEED IT.

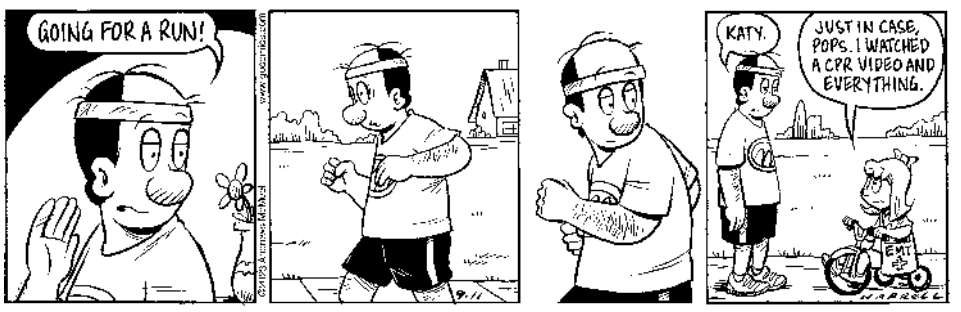
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

IT'S 7 A.M. BY NOW, SOME MEN HAVE FIXED THE TRACTOR, PLOWED THE LOWER FORTY...
MILKED THE COWS, SLOPPED THE PIGS, AND FED THE CHICKENS. YOU'D NEVER MAKE IT AS A FARMER.
DANG. AND I LOOK GREAT IN OVERALLS.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

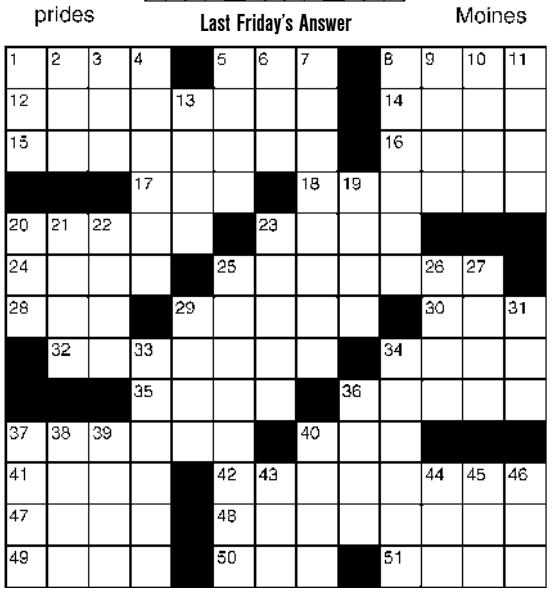
ACROSS
1 Marries
5 Smidgen
8 "Hey!"
12 "Well, maybe ..."
14 Teensy bit
15 African cape
16 "The Lion King" lion
17 W. Hemisphere gp.
18 Broadway's "Miss —"
20 Fetch
23 Opposite of "fer"
24 Actress Chaplin
25 Rejoices (in)
28 Moreover
29 Big knives
30 Garfield, for one
32 "Coneheads" star Dan
34 Rock's Bon —
35 Helps
36 Lions' prides
37 Asian capital
40 Corn serving
41 Elliptical
42 Better than "okay"
47 NYC gallery
48 Hit song by Adele
49 McGregor of film
50 Enzyme ending
51 Eggy drinks

DOWN
1 Costume hairpiece
2 Swelled head
3 Pair
4 Arizona resort
5 General — chicken
6 Nile biter
7 Is altruistic
8 Italian sandwich
9 Male deer
10 Alone
11 Eliot Ness, e.g.
13 Carpet type
19 Broadcasts
20 Feathery wrap
21 Novelist Jaffe
22 Race place
23 Sheedy and McBeal
25 "I like it!"
26 Nobel Prize subj.
27 Rescue
29 French cheese
31 Frank McCourt memoir
33 Test prep company
34 Shop talk
36 Oodles
37 Hefty book
38 Acknowledge
39 "— Rock"
40 Celtic tongue
43 Remote batteries, often
44 Lennon's partner
45 Texter's "Heavens!"
46 — Moines

Solution time: 21 mins.

C	I	A	■	F	A	L	L	■	G	P	A	S
A	I	R	■	O	V	I	D	■	U	R	N	S
T	I	B	F	R	I	U	S	■	S	F	N	T
■	■	O	A	T	S	■	■	S	T	Y	F	S
T	O	R	T	F	■	G	A	M	A	■	■	■
R	T	E	S	■	V	E	S	U	V	I	U	S
A	T	A	■	C	A	N	I	T	■	N	D	A
P	O	L	O	N	I	U	S	■	S	T	C	W
■	■	■	T	E	N	S	■	C	O	E	N	S
W	Y	A	T	T	■	■	C	H	A	R	■	■
A	O	N	E	■	A	Q	U	A	R	I	U	S
D	Y	E	R	■	P	U	L	L	■	O	F	T
S	O	W	S	■	P	O	L	K	■	R	O	E

Last Friday's Answer



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Taraji P. Henson, 53; Harry Connick Jr., 56; Virginia Madsen, 62; Scott Patterson, 65.

Happy Birthday: Set your sights high and call on people you can rely on for help. A determined attitude combined with ingenuity and a desire for change will open many opportunities. If you use common sense and keep your budget on track, you will be on the road to personal satisfaction. Make fitness and health your priorities. Your numbers are 8, 13, 25, 27, 30, 34, 42.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Self-improvement doesn't have to break the bank. Getting in shape can be done on a shoestring budget if you are determined to reach your goal. Put a routine in place and challenge yourself to be your very best. A personal gain will elevate your confidence. ✪✪✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Don't let temptation set in and logic depreciate. Pay attention to what others do and say, and weigh the pros and cons of overindulgence. Use your intelligence to come up with a safe and more efficient way to use your skills. ✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Participate, but don't burden yourself by taking on too much. Be sure you take care of your needs before offering your services to someone who would never do the same for you. Choose your battles wisely, and regard truth and honesty highly. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Rethink where your money goes. Cap your household budget and look for cheaper ways to fulfill your necessities. Using your imagination and discipline will give you hope for a brighter future. Don't let anger or frustration be your nemesis. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Simplify your life. Returning to a simpler lifestyle will help rebuild a more robust platform to grow and sustain what's meaningful to you. Change is never easy, but it is necessary. Thinking ahead will make you ready to explore whatever offers insight into what's available. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Listen and plan your actions using reason and logic, and success will follow. Your dedication and precision will pay off as you devise a plan that utilizes your skills, knowledge and experience. Put your energy into whatever excites you. ✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Sign up for something you believe in or that will help you improve your lifestyle or relationships. Changing your perspective regarding money matters will help you make better decisions and eliminate unnecessary expenses. Pay attention to detail. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* Take better care of yourself. Research what's available to help you declutter your life and balance your bank accounts. Look for a position that is more rewarding and less stressful. You'll feel better once you deal with whatever is holding you back. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Explore the possibilities. Attend events or reunions that can enrich your life and introduce you to what's trending and who's who in a field that interests you. Put your mind at ease by verifying the information you receive before moving forward. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* Invest wisely. Something good will transpire if you put energy into increasing your qualifications or skills, or making cost-efficient changes at home. Pay attention to your appearance, health and relationships with others. Don't take anything for granted. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* Do whatever it takes to get ahead. Show initiative, and don't let anyone take credit for your ideas or work. Someone will take advantage of you or lead you in the wrong direction if you give them the opportunity. Take care of personal business yourself. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* A realistic assessment of what someone offers will give you perspective regarding the possibilities. A partnership can help alleviate concerns regarding matters that are not your forte. Talks will lead to worthwhile deals, contracts and a change of attitude. Stay within your budget. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are astute, responsive and precise. You are original and generous.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	2	6	9			1	5	3
			4		6		7	
9				2		6		
2		5		6		7		1
3					2			4
7		9		4		3		6
1				9	7	4		5
					4	2	3	7
	7	4	2		5			

Difficulty: ★ 9/11

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

6	9	4	1	2	3	5	7	8
3	8	2	5	7	6	1	4	9
1	7	5	8	9	4	6	2	3
9	1	8	4	6	5	7	3	2
5	2	6	3	8	7	9	1	4
4	3	7	9	1	2	8	6	5
7	6	3	2	5	8	4	9	1
2	5	1	7	4	9	3	8	6
8	4	9	6	3	1	2	5	7

Difficulty: ★★★★ 9/9

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

PAT SAJAK IS RETIRING Solution: 9 letters

B	T	S	A	C	D	O	P	W	R	O	L	E	A	E
A	S	W	R	E	N	R	I	W	H	L	P	M	N	N
S	L	T	M	L	E	L	O	D	I	I	A	U	N	A
E	M	M	Y	T	W	H	A	R	A	G	T	D	A	L
B	I	A	I	L	S	L	R	N	G	R	R	E	V	P
A	K	R	E	C	E	E	R	I	O	A	I	M	I	R
L	W	Y	Ⓝ	X	H	E	E	F	N	H	C	A	E	I
L	D	L	Ⓘ	S	V	A	F	O	O	D	K	G	T	A
E	N	A	Ⓟ	E	D	O	E	S	E	A	S	O	N	S
T	E	N	Ⓢ	E	L	L	T	L	U	C	K	Y	A	T
T	K	D	V	E	E	R	G	O	L	D	E	N	M	A
E	E	R	E	S	E	L	Z	Z	U	P	B	W	A	R
R	E	H	L	G	D	A	Y	T	I	M	E	O	E	G
S	W	Y	I	P	R	O	D	U	C	E	R	N	T	U
J	U	S	T	M	E	N	D	E	P	A	T	K	A	R

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Airplane, Alex, Army, A-Team, Baseball, Daytime, Emmy, Game, Golden, Host, Just Men, Known, Leonard, Lesly, Letters, Lucky, Maggie, Maryland, Michael, News, Patrick, Podcast, Producer, Puzzles, Radio, Regis, Role, Rugrats, Seasons, Served, Severna, Sherrill, Show, Spin, Style, Taped, Trebek, Vanna, Vietnam, Weekend, Wheel of Fortune, White, Writer

Last Friday's Answer: Powerful

To purchase **WONDERWORD** books, visit www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. (In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367)

Coco Gauff wins US Open for her first Grand Slam title

NEW YORK (AP)— Coco Gauff is still a teenager, after all, and so it should surprise no one that she was on her phone in the locker room, scrolling through social media, right up until 10 minutes before heading out on court for the U.S. Open final.

What the 19-year-old from Florida was reading, she would say later, were various comments, negative ones, "saying I wasn't going to win today; that just put the fire in me."

As a pro athlete from a young age, as someone of whom greatness has been expected by some and doubted by others, Gauff has always taken it all in and kept moving forward, trying to learn from each setback. And now, at a tournament she used to visit as a kid to see her idols, Serena and Venus Williams, Gauff is a Grand Slam champion herself and a certified star.

Setting aside a so-so start Saturday, Gauff surged to a 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over the soon-to-be-No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the final at Arthur Ashe Stadium, delighting a raucous crowd that backed her from start to finish.

When Gauff walked into her news conference—phone in hand, of course—she noticed that a large screen on the back wall was rotating pictures of her from the match. So she tucked her new silver trophy under one arm and used the other hand to snap a selfie with those photos in the background.

"Right now I'm just feeling happiness and a very, very small bit of relief," she explained. "Because honestly, at this point, I was doing it for myself and not for other people."

Gauff, who is from Florida, is the first American teenager to win the country's major tennis tournament since Serena Williams in 1999. If last year's U.S. Open was all about saying goodbye to Williams as she competed for the final time, this year's two weeks in New York turned into a "Welcome to the big time!" moment for Gauff. Famous people were coming to watch her play, including former President Barack Obama, who was among those sending congratulatory wishes on Saturday.

AP

Coco Gauff, of the United States, poses for photographs after defeating Aryna Sabalenka, of Belarus, at the women's singles final of the U.S. Open tennis championships, Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023, in New York.

Gauff burst onto the scene at 15 by becoming the youngest qualifier in Wimbledon history and making it to the fourth round in her Grand Slam debut in 2019. She reached her initial major final at last year's French Open, finishing as the runner-up to Iga Swiatek, a loss that stung.

"I watched Iga lift up that trophy, and I watched her the whole time," Gauff recalled. "I said, 'I'm not going to take my eyes off her, because I want to feel what that felt like for her.'"

Another down moment came this July at the All England Club, where she exited in the first round. Since then, she has won 18 of 19 matches, and now 12 in a row, while working with a new coaching pair of Brad Gilbert and Pere Riba.

The No. 6-seeded Gauff did it Saturday by withstanding the power displayed by Sabalenka on nearly every swing of her racket, eventually getting accustomed to it and managing to get back shot after shot. Gauff broke to begin the third set on one such point, tracking down every ball hit her way until eventually smacking a putaway volley that she punctuated with a fist pump and a scream of "Come on!"

Soon it was 4-0 in that set for Gauff. Didn't take long for her to close it out, then drop to her back on the court, before climbing into the stands to find her parents.

"You did it!" Gauff's mom told her, both in tears.

In addition to her trophy, Gauff was handed an envelope with the champion's $3 million paycheck, the same amount Novak Djokovic or Daniil Medvedev will get after the men's final Sunday. This is the 50th anniversary of when the 1973 U.S. Open became the first major sports event to pay women and men equal prize money; the person who led that effort, Hall of Fame player and rights advocate Billie Jean King, was on hand Saturday.

"Thank you, Billie," Gauff said, "for fighting for this."

Sabalenka came in 23-2 at majors in 2023, including a title at the Australian Open. The 25-year-old from Belarus already was assured of rising from No. 2 to No. 1 in the rankings next week (Gauff will be No. 3 in singles, No. 1 in doubles).

That ranking milestone is "why I'm not super depressed right now," Sabalenka said, then joked: "I'm definitely going to be. I'm definitely going for a drink tonight—if I'm allowed to say that."

She was reduced to the role of foil by the fans in 23,000-capacity arena. Setting the tone, Gauff's pre-match TV interview, shown in the arena, was drowned out by the sound of applause and yells reverberating off the closed retractable roof.

Winners by Gauff were celebrated as if the match were over. So were Sabalenka's miscues. When Sabalenka heard cheers during the post-match ceremony, she joked: "You guys could have supported (me) like this during the match."

By the end, she had 46 unforced errors, Gauff 19. Here's another way to view it: Gauff only needed 13 winners to accumulate 83 points.

"Sometimes, I can get emotional," Sabalenka said. "Today on the court, I was overthinking and I was missing ... balls I shouldn't be missing."

When Sabalenka has everything calibrated just right, it's difficult for any foe to handle it—even someone as speedy, smart and instinctive as Gauff, whose get-to-every-ball court coverage kept points alive.

Sabalenka credited Gauff's superb defense—"definitely, she was moving just unbelievable" and "I always had to play like an extra ball"—but also thought many mistakes were "more about me than her. I lost this match."

When Sabalenka was on-target early, she dominated. During a four-game run to close the opening set, one thrilling point had the audience making noise before it was over. Gauff scrambled to get Sabalenka's strokes back, including somehow deflecting a booming overhead, before a second, unreachable overhead bounced into the seats.

Sabalenka raised her left hand and wagged her fingers, telling spectators to give her some love.

But soon, Gauff was playing better, Sabalenka was off-target more, and the love was being showered only on one of them, the sport's newest Grand Slam champion.

"Many more to come," Sabalenka said, "I'm pretty sure."

That will now be the pressure placed on Gauff: When's the next one? That's no easy burden. Consider: Two of the previous four U.S. Open women's champions were teens at the time, Bianca Andreescu in 2019 and Emma Raducanu in 2021, and neither has come close to replicating that success yet.

Gauff's maturity on and off a court should help her now as much as ever.

"I have just been embracing every positive and negative thing that's said about me. I realize sometimes people have different personalities and some people need to shut off the comments and not look at them. But I'm an argumentative person. I'm very stubborn," said Gauff, who chatted with her boyfriend until 1 a.m. the night before the biggest match of her life so far. "My parents know: If they tell me one thing, I like to do the other."

Spoken like a true teen.

Djokovic will face Medvedev in the US Open final

NEW YORK (AP)—Novak Djokovic limited big-serving Ben Shelton to five aces and broke him five times in their U.S. Open semifinal Friday. Djokovic pushed back when the 20-year-old unseeded American produced a late stand that got the home crowd into the match.

And after overcoming what he called "a little black hole" caused by tension to right himself, finish off a 6-3, 6-2, 7-6 (4) victory and reach his record-tying 10th final at Flushing Meadows and 36th at all major tournaments, Djokovic added a touch of insult to injury by mimicking the kid's "Hang up the phone!" celebration gesture.

Djokovic then pointed to his temple and pounded his fist on his chest, before a stone-faced Shelton met him at the net for the most perfunctory of handshakes. A year after Djokovic could not travel to the United States for the Open because he is not vaccinated against COVID-19, the 36-year-old from Serbia is one victory away from a fourth title in New York and 24th Grand Slam championship overall.

"Well, fact is that, at 36, every Grand Slam final ... could be the last one. So I think that I probably value these occasions and opportunities to win another Slam more than I have maybe 10 years ago," said Djokovic, who would be the oldest man to win the U.S. Open in the professional era, which began in 1968. "I don't know how many I have ahead of me now."

He has made it to the finals of all four majors this season, with victories at the Australian Open in January and French Open in June.

On Sunday, Djokovic will face 2021 U.S. Open champion Daniil Medvedev, who advanced by eliminating defending champ Carlos Alcaraz 7-6 (3), 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 in the second semifinal Friday night.

Alcaraz was asked how long this loss might bother him.

"Days? Weeks? I don't know. I don't think I'm going to think about this loss for a long time," he said. "Of course, I have to learn (from) it. I want to be better. These kind of matches help you a lot to be better and grow up."

The No. 3-seeded Medvedev, a 27-year-old from Russia, denied Djokovic a calendar-year Grand Slam by beating him in the final at Flushing Meadows two years ago.

"The challenge is that you play a guy that won 23 Grand Slams, and I have only one," Medvedev said, looking ahead to taking on Djokovic. "When I beat him here, I managed to play better than myself, so I need to do it again. There is no other way."

Both Medvedev and Alcaraz played brilliantly in parts, so-so in others. Both interacted with the spectators, pointing to an ear to ask for more noise. In the final game, fans called out as Medvedev double-faulted twice while trying to seal the win against a guy who beat him in the Wimbledon semifinals en route to the title there in July.

But Medvedev managed to hold on.

"Really happy," he said, "but the tournament is not over."

If Djokovic does end up leaving with the hardware this time, he would break a tie with Serena Williams for the most major singles championships in the Open era.

"It's another shot for history," said Djokovic, who was seeded No. 2 at the U.S. Open but will replace Alcaraz at No. 1 next week no matter what happens Sunday.

Diaz hits 2-run homer in 9th to lift Rays to 7-5 win over Mariners

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP)—Yandy Díaz hit a two-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning that gave the Tampa Bay Rays a 7-5 victory over the Seattle Mariners on Saturday.

Taylor Walls drew a two-out walk from Tayler Saucedo (3-2) before Díaz connected on his opposite-field drive to right.

Díaz also had a pinch-hit RBI double during a two-run seventh as Tampa Bay went up 5-4.

The Rays hold a 7 1/2-game lead over Seattle and Toronto for the top AL wild card. Tampa Bay started the day four back of AL East-leading Baltimore, while the Mariners were a half-game behind first-place Houston in the AL West.

Colin Poche (11-3) pitched a perfect ninth to get the win.

Seattle slugger Julio Rodríguez hit his career-high 29th homer and is one short of joining Alex Rodriguez as the only Mariners to have 30 homers and 30 steals in the same season.

AP

Tampa Bay Rays' Yandy Diaz watches the ball after hitting a walk off two-run home run against the Seattle Mariners during a baseball game Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023, in St. Petersburg, Fla.

ORIOLES 13, RED SOX 12

BOSTON (AP)—Yenier Cano retired Enmanuel Valdéz on a game-ending flyout that stranded the tying run on third as Boston's ninth-inning rally fell short, and Baltimore held on for its seventh straight win.

The Orioles opened leads of 7-2 in the fourth, 12-6 in the seventh and 13-9 in the ninth as Aaron Hicks and rookie Gunnar Henderson hit three-run homers and Jordan Westburg had a solo shot.

Boston closed in the ninth on Trevor Story's two-run, two-out double and Wilyer Abreu's RBI single before Valdez's opposite-field flyout to left that Austin Hays caught in front of the Green Monster.

Baltimore won for the 13th time in 16 games and became the first AL team to reach 90 wins. Shintaro Fujinami (7-8) pitched 1 2/3 innings.

DIAMONDBACKS 3, CUBS 2, 10 INNINGS

CHICAGO (AP)—Tommy Pham hit an RBI single in the 10th inning, and Arizona got its fourth straight win.

Gabriel Moreno scored on a wild pitch before Pham drove in Jordan Lawlar with a liner to left against rookie Daniel Palencia (5-1). Lawlar was hit by a pitch and advanced on Yan Gomes' passed ball before taking third on the wild pitch.

Kevin Ginkel (8-0) got three outs for the win and Paul Sewald worked the 10th for his 32nd save. Cody Bellinger hit a two-out RBI single, but Sewald got Dansby Swanson to foul out to the catcher.

RANGERS 3, ATHLETICS 2

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP)—Robbie Grossman scored the tiebreaking run on a wild pitch in the seventh inning and Texas snapped a four-game losing streak.

Grossman drew the first of three consecutive two-out walks against Lucas Erceg (3-4). Reliever Francisco Perez took over and uncorked a wild pitch when facing pinch-hitter Jonathan Ornelas in his first major league at-bat. Ornelas had an inning-ending flyout.

The Rangers won for only the fifth time in their last 21 games, a span when they have gone from a 3 1/2-game lead to third place in the AL West.

Nathaniel Lowe and Leody Taveras had RBI singles to give Texas a 2-0 lead in the sixth, when Grossman also walked and scored. But last-place Oakland got even in the top of the seventh on Zack Gelof's two run homer.

CARDINALS 4, REDS 3

CINCINNATI (AP)—Willson Contreras homered for the third straight game and drove in three runs as St. Louis handed Cincinnati its third straight loss.

Lars Nootbaar broke a 3-3 tie in the fourth with a two-out RBI double off Sam Moll after Tommy Edman chased Carson Spiers (0-1) with a leadoff single. The Cardinals have won four of five.

Cincinnati (73-71) fell 7 1/2 games behind NL Central-leading Milwaukee with 18 games left, and sits 2 1/2 games behind Arizona for the last NL wild card berth.

Zack Thompson (5-5) improved to 3-0 in his last four starts. allowing three runs and five hits in six innings with six strikeouts and three walks, Casey Lawrence, John King and Giovanny Gallegos each pitched a scoreless inning.

Ryan Helsley walked Christian Encarnacion-Strand leading off the ninth, and Tyler Stephenson hit a grounder to shortstop Masyn Winn for the forceout. Second baseman Tommy Edman's throw to first wasn't in time as Encarnacion-Strand barreled into Edman and flipped him, and a video review determined Encarnacion-Strand had committed a baserunning violation, and Stephenson was called out.

TIGERS 3, WHITE SOX 1

DETROIT (AP)—Tarik Skubal pitched five scoreless innings and Detroit beat Chicago.

Matt Vierling homered and scored twice for the Tigers.

Skubal (5-3) allowed two hits while striking out nine. It was his second win over the White Sox in six days. Alex Lange got four outs for his 22nd save.

Jose Ureña (0-5) made his Chicago debut, permitting one run and four hits in four innings. The White Sox struck out 15 times.

ASTROS 7, PADRES 5

HOUSTON (AP)—Yordan Alvarez homered and Kyle Tucker added two RBIs to give him an American League-leading 101 as Houston used a big fifth inning to rally for a win over San Diego.

The Astros bounced back after losing the opener 11-2 to get their fourth win in five games and increase their lead over the Mariners in the AL West to 1 1/2 games.

Houston scored five runs in the fifth to take a 7-4 lead. Alvarez, who hit a solo homer in the third, had an RBI double in the fifth before Tucker's two-run double put the Astros on top. It was just their third win in 13 games at home.

Closer Ryan Pressly walked Ha-Seong Kim to start the ninth before giving up a single to Juan Soto with one out. But he struck out Manny Machado and Xander Bogaerts to end the threat and get his 30th save.

The Astros went to their bullpen early after starter Cristian Javier allowed four hits and four runs in just four innings. Phil Maton (4-3) pitched a perfect fifth for the win.

San Diego's Seth Lugo (6-7) gave up seven hits and six runs in 4 1/3 innings.

PIRATES 8, BRAVES 4

ATLANTA (AP)—Bryan Reynolds had three hits, including a two-run homer, and Pittsburgh prevented Atlanta from becoming the first major league team to clinch a playoff berth.

The Pirates took the lead by scoring three runs in the fifth. Endy Rodriguez delivered an RBI single off Michael Tonkin for a 4-3 lead. Jack Suwinski and Ji Hwan Bae also had run-scoring singles in the inning. Bae scored from first on Ke'Bryan Hayes' double in the third.

Reynolds homered off Dylan Dodd (2-2) in the third. Liover Peguero added to the lead with a home run off Kirby Yates in the ninth.

Atlanta's Matt Olson hit his major league-leading 48th homer off Carmen Mlodzinski in the seventh, his fifth in the last six games.

Ryan Borucki (2-0) got the win

In a pregame ceremony, the Braves retired the No. 25 of 10-time Gold Glove center fielder Andruw Jones.

PHILLIES 8, MARLINS 4

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—Kyle Schwarber hit a three-run homer and Brandon Marsh had a three-run double to lead Philadelphia.

Schwarber hit his 42nd this season and his three RBIs gave him 93, and he may set career highs in both categories -- all while his batting average hovers under .200 this season.

Schwarber's shot into the Phillies' bullpen off Marlins starter Johnny Cueto (1-4) broke open a five-run second inning. Nick Castellanos, in his first game since the All-Star was dropped to eighth in the lineup, added a two-run double.

The Marlins' best chance in the wild-card race is trying to catch Arizona for the third spot.

Garrett Hampson hit a solo shot and the Marlins got run-scoring doubles from Jacob Stallings and Josh Bell that cut it to 5-4 in the fifth.

Jeff Hoffman (4-2) tossed 1 2/3 scoreless innings for the win and three other relievers shut down the Marlins.

TWINS 8, METS 4

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Kyle Farmer went 3 for 4 with a pair of two-out RBIs, Max Kepler hit a three-run triple and AL Central-leading Minnesota beat New York.

Kenta Maeda won for the first time in six starts and Willi Castro went 3 for 4 with a home run for the Twins, who moved a season-best eight games above .500. They cut their magic number for clinching the division to 14 with 20 games to go.

Brandon Nimmo hit his fifth leadoff homer of the year and Daniel Vogelbach added an RBI single in the first inning to give the Mets a quick lead, but starter David Peterson didn't hold it.

All of Minnesota's runs scored with two outs, starting with a two-run single by Donovan Solano in the first. After Jordan Luplow hustled for a double in the third inning, Farmer drove him in with a single. Then with the bases loaded in the seventh against Drew Smith, Kepler pinch hit for Luplow and missed a grand slam by a few inches when his drive off the wall in right-center landed below the flower boxes.

Pete Alonso hit his 43rd homer and D.J. Stewart also went deep in the eighth inning off rookie Louie Varland, but the Mets fell to 29-44 on the road.

BLUE JAYS 5, ROYALS 1

TORONTO (AP)—George Springer homered twice and drove in four runs, Kevin Gausman struck out 10 over eight sharp innings and the Toronto Blue Jays moved a season-best 16 games above .500.

Vladimir Guerrero Jr. had two hits for the Blue Jays, who began the day 1 1/2 games ahead of Texas for the final AL wild-card berth. Toronto has won five of six and is 6-2 in September.

Springer homered against Zach Greinke (1-15) in the fourth and Angel Zerpa in the seventh, his 21st multihomer game and first this year. Springer has 19 homers.

Gausman (11-8) allowed one run and two hits, and raised his AL-leading strikeouts total to 217 with his eighth eighth double-digit strikeout game this season and first since June 27. He struck out the side in the eighth.

Kansas City lost its third straight. The Royals are one defeat from their first 100-loss season since 2019.

Greinke is one loss shy of tying teammate Jordan Lyles for the major league lead.

BREWERS 9, YANKEES 2

NEW YORK (AP)—Tyrone Taylor hit a go-ahead homer as Christian Yelich's fill-in to start a three-run eighth inning that sparked Milwaukee after New York celebrated the 25th anniversary of its 1998 championship team.

With the score 2-2, Taylor hit a 1-0 sinker off Jonathan Loáisiga (0-2) down the left field line for his sixth homer. Taylor was inserted into Milwaukee's lineup when Yelich was scratched due to lower back soreness about 10 minutes before the scheduled start of a game delayed by rain for 2 hours, 34 minutes.

Milwaukee opened a four-game NL Central lead over the second-place Chicago Cubs.

New York had four hits and managed just seven in the first two games of the series, getting outscored 13-0 from the seventh inning on. The Yankees have lost three straight after winning eight of nine and are in danger of their first losing season since 1992.

Taylor got his seventh career three-hit game and reached four times.

Joel Payamps (5-4) struck out rookie Jasson Domínguez with Aaron Judge on first to end the seventh.

Medals at stake, with Serbia-Germany for gold, US-Canada for bronze

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Serbia has a chance for its biggest win in 21 years. Canada is seeking its first medal at a major global tournament in 87 years. Germany is one win away from its biggest basketball accomplishment, ever.

And then there's the U.S., playing for bronze.

The Basketball World Cup—a 32-team odyssey that played out in three countries over the last 2½ weeks—ends in Manila on Sunday with the medal games. It's an all-European final with Germany (7-0) facing Serbia (6-1) for gold, and an all-North American matchup with Canada (5-2) playing the U.S. (5-2) for the bronze.

"The world is good at basketball," U.S. point guard and captain Jalen Brunson said Saturday at the team's final practice of the summer. "Respect everybody."

AP

Germany guard Andreas Obst lays on the ground as teammates celebrates after winning against the United States in a Basketball World Cup semi final game in Manila, Philippines, Friday, Sept. 8, 2023.

Germany and Serbia have certainly earned tons of respect and will be on the medal podium together just as they were at the 2002 world championships; Serbia won its most recent world title in that event (as the former Yugoslavia) while Germany got what, until now, was its first and only World Cup or Olympics medal—a bronze.

Germany reached the final by topping the U.S. 113-111 in the semifinals. Serbia beat Canada 95-86 in the other semifinal.

"From the first day we got together this summer, we believed that we're a special group and we can win against any team," German forward Franz Wagner said.

Serbian coach Svetislav Pesic was the gold-medal-winning coach in that 2002 tournament. Now 74, he has a chance to win the World Cup again 21 years later.

"I don't want to say it, but he's toward the end of his career," Serbian forward Filip Petrusev said. "He accepted the job to try to bring a medal back, so I think it means the world to him, means the world to us, everybody really back home."

There were 26 NBA players in the World Cup semifinals, 19 of them playing on the U.S. or Canadian rosters—and at least seven of those 19 guys won't be going home with a medal. Germany has four NBA players, Serbia three.

"Part of competition is you're not going to win every time," U.S. coach Steve Kerr said. "You're going to compete, do everything you can to win, but part of competition is accepting the fact that there's going to be some heartbreak."

There's going to be more on Sunday for either the U.S. or Canada.

The rivalry between neighbor nations officially goes back 87 years—they played in the final of the 1936 Olympic tournament, the U.S. winning 19-8 in a game played outdoors, in a rainstorm, on a clay court that was a muddy, sloppy mess. In senior men's competitions, the U.S. is 21-1 against Canada; the loss was in the preliminary round of the 2005 FIBA Americas championship.

"What we need to do now is bounce back and be excited for this next game," Canada coach Jordi Fernandez said after his team fell in the semifinals, before knowing the Americans would be the opponent to decide bronze. "Me personally? I'm already excited. ... We're going to bounce back."

2nd TTT Mix Classic Fishing tourney postponed

Due to inclement weather and a small craft advisory, Tasi To Table Inc.'s 2nd Annual Mix Classic Fishing Tournament is postponed until further notice.

The tournament was set for last Saturday from 6am to 5pm at the Smiling Cove Marina, but a Special Marine Advisory for small crafts was issued at 4:25am that morning by the CNMI Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

Joshua Santos, TTT public relations officer, said, "We thank everyone who came out and registered yesterday (Friday) for your support of Tasi To Table. We will provide more updates and a new derby date soon."

As of yesterday, no new dates for the tournament have been set yet.

Proceeds from the tournament benefit the 501(c)3 non-profit corporation of TTT Inc. to support its continued mission for the youth programs spearheaded by TTT Inc. with the CNMI Public School System.

The TTT Mix Classic Fishing Tournament is a new tournament focusing on targeted pelagic fish species. However, in order to qualify your catch, submitting captain/anglers catch must include a combination of the qualifying pelagic species.

The qualifying pelagic species are as follows: billfish, yellowfin tuna, wahoo, mahi mahi, and skipjack tuna.

The combined weight of the two different pelagic species (billfish and wahoo, yellowfin tuna and skipjack tuna, etc.) selected by the team in competition is their weight category to determine the winner. Two of the same species do not qualify.

The prizes for first place is a whopping $3,000; second place is $2,000; third place is $1,000; fourth place is $750; and fifth place is $500.

Sponsors of the event are IT&E, IP&E, Bud Light, Fishing Tackle & Sporting Goods, and Marianas Visitors Authority.

FLOYD MASGA

A boat owned by Supreme Court Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro won the Tasi To Table Inc.'s Inaugural Mix Classic held in the waters off the CNMI last year.

GECKOS

From page 20

regular and sunny day and swept the elementary school boys and girls division.

In the boys division, SIS garnered 20 points for first place; second place was Brilliant Star School with 38 points; and third place was San Vicente Elementary School with 56 points.

Cross country is similar to golf in that the lowest score wins.

SIS girls also dominated the elementary school girls division with 17 points; second place was BSS again with 28 points; and third place Mount Carmel School with 40 points.

In the individual boys standings, first place was SIS' Gabriel Walsh at 7:36; second place was Beau Bauer from Grace Christian Academy at 7:37; and third place was SIS' Ezra West at 7:42.

For the girls, BSS' Lovell Spaeth took first place at 7:48; second place was Kaylen Taflinger from GCA at 8:08; and third place was Lucy Thomson from BSS at 8:23.

Dr. Ron Snyder, SIS headmaster and meet director, said of the first qualifier, "I am extremely proud of how our sport is developing. In the past, the stormy weather would have driven away athletes but we had more than 200 runners and their parents show up pre-dawn in the pouring rain to compete. What a great turnout and support for this amazing sport!"

He then added, "I was disappointed that ACS didn't show up. The HS boys division will be a tight competition this year between ACS and MHS and I was hoping for a bit of a preview."

As a coach, Snyder said he is very proud of the Geckos. "It was a brilliant first day with five out of six of the gold medals in the individual awards and four out of six of the team championships."

He said that this is the 30th year anniversary for SIS and is looking forward to some strong competition in all the meets. "We are also celebrating with the wider community and have ordered participation medals for all participants in the Gecko 5000 this year. It should be a great meet but next up is the AMP Invitational hosted by Run Saipan. We are setting it up following the Star Wars Day run so that the kids won't be on the street at all. It should be a fast and fun race!"

The next qualifier is this coming Saturday, Sept. 16, hosted by Run Saipan at the American Memorial Park; the SIS Gecko 5000 at Banzai Cliff is on Sept. 30; the Kagman High School Invitational at ChaCha Ocean View Middle School is on Oct. 7; and the championship is set for Oct. 14 at the Saipan Country Club at Saipan Vegas.

Results of the middle school and high school division will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

PAJARILLAGA

From page 20

"I felt pretty good, but I feel like I could have done better with more practice with a 50m pool. The race itself was tiring because I was not used to that type of experience with that long distance," said Pajarillaga on his last swim in the championships and on breaking the CNMI record.

He also said throughout the race, he felt like he was going to beat the record.

The Grace Christian Academy student then said that his first international experience was a great one and hopes to compete in more. "I would say my first international competition went well. I would take this experience to apply some strategies I used in this competition in future competitions," he said.

Pajarillaga said he's been practicing consistently, "but for Israel specifically it was around summer time," he said. "The practices played a big role in my performance. I would like to thank God, my coaches [Richard Sikkel and Hiroyuki Kimura], and my family for this opportunity."

The swimmer of eight years said he especially thanks Kimura for taking him through his whole swimming journey.

For what's next, the Tsunami Saipan Swim Club member said he is going to compete in the 2023 Pacific Games and the World Aquatics Championships.

Pajarillaga also competed in the 100m backstroke and finished with a time of 1:02.94; in the 50m backstroke, he claimed second place in Heat 1 with a time of 28.67; and in the 100m freestyle, he clocked in at 56.20 which was good for third place in Heat 2.

CNMI national head coach Richard Sikkel said, "Kean did a great job keeping a consistent pace throughout the entire race."

Results of Jinie Thompson and Taiyo Akimaru's events will be posted in the next issues of *Saipan Tribune.*

DELEON

From page 20

Tony Reyes brought out the lumber in hole No. 10 and ditto for Manibusan in hole No. 18 in the longest drive contest.

With his August win, Deleon Guerrero now joins our SGA 2023 Ace of Aces Qualifiers Ray Salas (January), Das Krishnan (February), Joe I. Sablan (March), Rick Kautz (April), Nick Sablan (May), and Tony Reyes (June).

The SGA 2023 August Ace of the Month Tournament was scheduled yesterday at Coral Ocean Point. The SGA 2023 September Ace of the Month Tournament, meanwhile, is scheduled on Sept. 24 with the venue still to be determined.

Coco Gauff wins US Open for her first Grand Slam title.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Medals at stake, with Serbia-Germany for gold, US-Canada for bronze.

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Geckos sweep ES in Schools Cross Country return

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

It's that time of the year again—the early morning dew, fresh air flowing through the freshly cut grass, and school children running on a Saturday morning—all signaling the start of the All Schools Cross Country season.

The heavy lightning and thunderstorm the night before didn't put a damper on the runners of the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country 2023-2024 season as they took to the CPA Airport Field last Saturday morning for the first qualifier.

It was early, wet, and cold—the kind of dawn when most kids were still tucked under their warm blankets—especially on a weekend. But not the young cross country athletes. That morning, the Saipan International School Geckos traversed the course like any

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LEIGH GASES
The Saipan International School elementary cross country team poses for a photo before the start of the first qualifier of the PSS/NMA All Schools Cross Country 2023-2024 at the CPA Airport Field last Saturday morning.

Deleon Guerrero wins SGA August tilt

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Larry Deleon Guerrero captured the Saipan Golfers Association August Ace of the Month Tournament last Aug. 27 at the LaoLao Bay Golf & Resort east course

The 68-year-old former lawmaker shot a net score of 70 to humble all participants of the monthly swing-off. The 20-handicapper fired a gross of 90 following twin 45s in the front and back nines.

"I dedicate my winning the SGA August Ace to my fellow golfers, my family, and to all the people who love the sport," he said.

Deleon Guerrero then attribute him emerging as the last man standing in the August Ace to his "physical and mental emphasis in making a decent shot on every hole of the game."

He also thanked Mother Nature and the greenskeepers at the Kagman golf course for making it ideal to play the sport he absolutely loves that particular weekend.

"The weather was absolutely beautiful that Sunday so unlike the weather we are experiencing these past several days."

Attorney General Edward Manibusan litigated his way to a second-place finish in the monthly competition with his 75 net following an 83 gross. The 8-handicapper shot 40 in the first nine holes and a 43 in the last nine.

Joe Demapan actually tied the president of the Commonwealth Federation of Golf Associations with his 75. He, however, lost via scorecard tiebreak. He carded a gross of 97 (50-47) and went down to 75 by virtue of his 22 handicap.

In the closest to the pin competition, Joe I. Sablan lorded it over hole No. 6, while Deleon Guerrero was without peer in hole No. 11. There were no winners in holes No. 4 and 15.

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Deleon Guerrero

Pajarillaga breaks CNMI 200m backstroke record

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Kean Pajarillaga ended the 9th FINA Junior World Championships in Netanya, Israel with a bang as he set a new 200m backstroke CNMI record last Saturday.

His time of 2:16.69 was more than enough to beat the nine-year standing CNMI record time of 2:18.04 made by Kensuke Kimura in 2014.

The 17-year-old Pajarillaga's time earned him second place in Heat 1 of the competition.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI swimmer Kean Pajarillaga, left, smiles as teammate Taiyo Akimaru looks at the camera during the 9th FINA Junior World Championships in Netanya, Israel from Sept. 4 to 9.